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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

CHRISTIANITY

APPLIED TO OUR

CIVIL AND SOCIAL RELATIONS.

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PREFACE.

The following discourses are not a connected series, though all of them aim at the same principle. As they touch upon subjects of agitating interest, and have occassioned severe strictures, it is thought best to give them to the public in their original form. The author has a high esteem for many who differ from him respecting the most Christian way of treating certain subjects tending to alienations in church and state, especially masonry and slavery. But it is hoped that we all have in view the same good object; let us then speak out our views freely and in love. Now that the excitement of the moment is over, if, on reading and calmly pondering the sentiments of these discourses, any Christian brethren are justly grieved or offended, none will more regret it than the author, by whom, with fervent prayer for the divine blessing upon them, they are presented to THE PUBLIC.

SERMON I.

THE CHRISTIAN WAY TO PROMOTE LIBERTY AND UNION IN CHURCH AND STATE.

A Discourse preached in Bowdoin Street Church, on the Sabbath contiguous to the 4th of July, 1835.

2 Cor. 3: 17. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

John 17: 21. That they all may be one.

Standing on a national summit, to which we have been elevated by an unparalleled combination of propitious events, we cast a solicitous eye to the future. Beholding this vast empire, stretching from sea to sea and from the burning to the frigid zone, its hundreds of lofty mountains, spacious valleys, majestic rivers, already impressed by the footsteps and yielding to the skill of civilized man; its forests melting rapidly away, and the wilderness everywhere beginning to bud and blossom as the rose; towns, villages, cities, springing up like enchantment on every side; enterprise unequaled, and wealth rolling in like a flood; liberty and abundance, simultaneous gladness and dancing in

twelve million hearts ; who can forbear to inquire, What is to be the end of all this? This nation, destined if it survives to be the greatest and mightiest on the globe, is it to be united, permanent, pious, happy, the grand asylum of unabused freedom, the light and joy of the world? Will that sun rise as bright on our children, as this day it rose on us? Do not those sins which offend God and ruin men and nations, exist among us? And do no portentous signs in the far heavens, no sullen murmurs beneath, no trembling at the basis of religious institutions and constitutional rights, no agitation of heated, impatient elements, admonish us of approaching tempest, earthquake, revolution, ruin?

Yet far be it from me to forbode evil. Rather would I endeavor to point out the means of averting it. I purpose to speak of LIBERTY AND UNION both in church and state. To unfold the means of their perfection and perpetuity, this is my object. May the spirit of the Highest overshadow, pervade, inspire us ; what is ignorant, instruct ; what is dark, enlighten ; energize what is feeble ; dispel all blinding passion and prejudice ; animate every mind with heaven's richest gift, a pure and ardent love of truth, of God, of man.

My desire is to reach a PRINCIPLE. I am not unapprised of the danger of hasty generalization ; but if it be characteristic of impetuous narrow minded-

ness, on slender bases to establish sweeping principles, and push them to extremities, not less does it betray mental feebleness and inefficiency, forever to wander in a wilderness of facts, resolving them into no common principle of unity, order, design. If we must generalize with caution, still must we do it; if, in pursuing a great principle, we should make haste slowly, still should we make sufficient despatch to overtake it at last. It is nature. The entire universe, physical and moral, is governed by laws few and simple. In proof of this, observe that the progress of all science towards perfection is marked by a resolution of isolated facts into general principles. Out of multitudinous chaos and darkness, gradually emerge order and light. In the physical sciences, what worlds of individual facts; what libraries to contain them. Ascend to general principles and ultimately you arrive, it is believed, at one generic law which regulates the whole. So also in the science of morals. Volumes suffice not for all the laws; yet are they comprehended in a single sentence, almost in a single word.

My principle is this, that the SPIRIT OF THE GOSPEL is alone adequate to perfect and perpetuate all genuine liberty and union, both in church and state. Let me first define terms. By the spirit of the gospel, I mean BENEVOLENCE, sincere and universal. It seeks the best interests of all men, temporal and eternal. It is the essential fulfilling of that divine

law, which ought to govern the moral universe. Where this spirit lives and shines, it is death to alienations. Let it reign perfectly over the world, and earth is heaven. Discussions and differences of opinion may still exist, energy of thought and feeling may be engaged on various sides; but all tending to mutual edification and love.

However bold and faithful a man is in exposing what he conceives to be your errors, let it be manifest to you that he sincerely seeks your best interest, and can you hate him? Although you may not believe his doctrine, or feel the force of his rebuke, will he not gain your heart by love, if not by argument? This is the spirit that is to subdue mankind to a righteous moral government. "God so loved the world." Let the same spirit reign in his servants, and the great conquest will be achieved. Mere knowledge cannot do it; argument cannot do it; laws cannot do it; this spirit can. It contends earnestly for truth, but it contends in love; it rejoices not in iniquity, but it endureth all things, hopeth all things, never faileth; and when it goes forth in its full strength, it has mighty power to disarm passion and prejudice and sin itself.

By liberty, I define the condition of a mind rising from the dominion of selfishness and prejudice, standing erect towards heaven and animated with its spirit. It is a mind emancipated from internal bondage, putting out its intellectual powers

freely, and enjoying all the immunities of ecclesiastical and civil franchise. It is a mind free to think, choose, act, on all subjects, private and public, religious and secular, controlled only by love to God and man, responsible only to a sound conscience, a righteous public sentiment, a future divine judgment. Where the spirit of the Lord is, in its most perfect reign, there is this liberty. A community of such minds, is a nation of freemen.

By UNION, I mean ONENESS OF AFFECTION AND AIM. It is the union of kindred minds, rendered such by benevolence. All other union is forced, the result external pressure. This is an elective moral affinity extending through the ranks of celestial beings, entering and possessing human minds, uniting God, angels, men, in a bond of common union, according to the divine prayer, 'that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.'

It is not, however, apprehended that all churches, all political parties, all nations, are ever to put on precisely the same form, much less to be melted into one body. All fatal errors will be abandoned, but distinct churches, various ecclesiastical forms, tenets unlike in unessential particulars, will perhaps survive as long as time. So also different politics, various forms of government, sectional and national peculiarities may always exist; it is probably best they should. While there will be enough of diverse

opinions, discussions, inquiries on the various topics of religion, science, arts, government, to prevent the mortal elements from settling into a stagnant calm, they will still be so tempered with the spirit of the gospel, as never to rise into an angry tempest. If men do not all agree to think exactly alike, they will agree to differ and love each other still.

Under the reign of such a spirit, religion must enjoy unprecedented prosperity; for nothing has so retarded its progress, as the deficiency of this in the Christian church. Nations must prosper, our own nation become glorious and lasting as the sun and stars; for nothing destroys nations, nothing endangers our own, but the opposite of this spirit. Literature, sience, arts must prosper; for nothing so narrows down and vandalizes the mind, as that dominion of prejudice and passion which this spirit tends to remove. It is under such a reign, therefore, that primeval paradise is again to blossom.

That mankind are on the whole advancing towards such a state, cannot be doubted. Intolerance and persecution are gradually losing ground. The brand, the scourge, the furnace, the scaffold, have seen their day. Religious discussions are becoming less acrimonious, and minor differinces of sects are attended with less alienation of affection than formerly. Though many in name, all real Christians are becoming more one in heart. Politics are indeed

still selfish and noisy, and withal somewhat wrathful at times, but they have become nearly disarmed of all weapons more disastrous than words. A moral influence emanating from the gospel, tending at once to exalt beneficence and to soften asperities and encourage toleration, is steadily setting forth upon the world. And all good minds anticipate a fulfillment of those prophetic voices, which predict universal peace on earth and good will to men ; the churches of Christ, one ; nations, one ; all animosities and wars ended ; a mellennial reign of peace, love, joy, over the earth.

Yet long before the golden age shall fully come, an essential change of means must be realized in one capital respect. There must be more of *pro-ism* and less of *anti-ism* ; more of benevolent, positive movement towards the good, and less of angry assault upon the supposed bad. Religious sects, for instance, have hitherto made the building up of themselves very much to consist in the pulling down of others. While the Christian spirit was fresh and active in the vitals of the church, she was of one soul ; her members, with few exceptions, stood fast in 'one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel.' But follow her from the beginning of the second century, and you behold her catholic zeal for reclaiming the world to God lost in animosities among her own members. Who can observe her motions, as she descends the track

of time along the dark ages, see her eyes closed upon the perishing nations, her ears deaf to the last mandate of her Lord, while libraries rose under the angry pens of her unsanctified zeal expended upon contemptible trifles, and not weep to think of the millions thus left to perish in darkness and sin?

While the conflict was new and urgent between Protestant and Papal forces, Protestants were one; but no sooner did it subside, than Protestants began to contend among themselves. Lutherans and Calvinists first set their faces against each other; and soon followed the numerous contending sects of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Socinians, Universalists, Baptists, Methodists, Quakers, Congregationalists. Not only have these sects contended against each other, but among themselves. A brief respite from foreign hostilities; has been a signal for civil war. Episcopacy is severed into high and low church; Presbyterianism is in a progress of separation; Socinianism is approaching a similar catastrophy; Universalism is divided into Ultraism and Restorationism; Antinomianism and its opposite divide the Baptists; Methodism is quite rent in sunder; Quakerism is in like disaster, Congregationalism is not exempt from alienations. What a picture of the Christian church, whose great central law is *love!*

Nations, too, have ever been dashing against each other. Not only so, when war without has ceased,

war within has begun. The pressure of external hostilities removed, the elements of internal discord have been let loose, and what foreign foes could not accomplish has been the work of foes at home. Is not such the history of ancient kingdoms, Egypt, Assyria, Macedonia, Judea, Greece, Carthage, Rome; of more modern kingdoms, too numerous and familiar to be mentioned?

It would seem then to be problematical whether large and free bodies, either ecclesiastical or civil, can be long united. History would seem to have developed but two sad means, by which, mainly, communities of all kinds have hitherto been held together. The one is that of taking away light and liberty. Despotic governments, like those of China and the papal church, hold their subjects together by holding them in bondage to ignorance. The other means, is that of making common cause against an enemy; as whon the Protestants were contending against the Catholics, and the American colonies against the oppressions of Britain.

Are mankind then always to be either in bondage or contention? Is slavery or war the only alternative? How then are we to anticipate the promised ages of universal liberty and union, when all shall be free and all united? Is there no power in the moral analogous to that in the physical universe, competent at once to set all minds free and yet to unite all in bonds of abiding union? Certainly there

is. It is the law of the living spirit of the gospel. It is through the more engrossing cultivation of this, that the desired blessing will finally come. The excellent philosophy will be more practically recognized, that the way to subvert error is to build up truth, the way to dispel darkness is to introduce light. When God dispelled the darkness of primeval chaos, it was not by contending with it or commanding it to retire, but by creating light. The way to reclaim a wandering world is, not to draw the sword of hostility against, but to present to it its lost God, his character, his law; Christ, his gospel, his everlasting rewards; hold up to it in towering eminence the great object, holiness, without which no man can inherit life, and towards which all hearts should continually press.

The duty of the gospel minister especially, in relation to the various agitating subjects of the day, is then very plain. Greatly do those men mistake who apprehend that the apostles were mainly engaged in attacking this or that particular vice. Thousands have spent their lives thus and effected nothing. Do you suppose that the gospel would ever have made its way into the world thus? The apostles had another and a higher work to do, than to go out and get up anti societies against particular vices. This may be a very suitable and important work for those to whom it is assigned, but it can never be the *engrossing* work of the gospel minister who

walks in the steps of apostles. They went out to hold up to mankind the great generic remedy of ALL sin, to proclaim Christ and him crucified; to make known the transforming doctrine, that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have eternal life; to preach repentance towards God and faith in Christ. Such was the burden of their souls. They labored directly and absorbingly to pour back the lost light of heaven into the dark and fallen world. Thus when Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill, and his spirit was stirred in him on seeing the city wholly given to idolatry, he did not spend his breath in a storm of wrath against that sin, but, 'whom they ignorantly worshipped, him did he declare unto them;' and having unfolded the glorious perfections of the true God, in this light he presented to them his 'command to all men everywhere to repent, because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness.' So preached all the apostles. Preaching the cardinal doctrines of the gospel, was the grand means by which they persuaded men to abandon their errors and their sins. It was by the expulsive power of the new affection, that men became divorced from their idolatries.

While we advocate the enforcement of the Christian doctrines, as the essential work of the gospel ministry, with equal earnestness do we

plead that it be done in the exercise of the Christian spirit. A man may espouse the most accurate doctrines, and still push forward his cause with none other than the bitter and fruitless spirit of fanatical extermination. He may be a bold champion of truth, a tireless heresy-hunter, a most accurate critic, a dexterous pugilist, all for the Christian cause, as he doubts not, and yet himself not be a Christian. And while we assign the first place to the doctrines of Christianity, inculcated with the right spirit, we are far from believing that infinite interests are made to turn on a hypercritical exegesis, or profoundly erudite hermeneutics; or a word, or a letter, or a point; or on a wire-drawn metaphysical abstraction, so tenuous as to elude all but the keenest optics, and thus provoke contention between those who can see it and those who cannot. We believe that the great Christian doctrines and the conditions of everlasting life may be made to stand forth to all eyes like the sun, concealed from none but the wilfully blind. God made that sun to enlighten the world; not less the gospel.

A tendency has ever existed among Christians, to decline from the higher and more spiritual duties of religion to an absorbing interest in those more remote and secular; which inevitably produces alienation, and brings disaster to vital religion. For no sooner do they descend from the position in which they are unitedly held in su-

preme devotement to the same great spiritual object, than one man fastens upon one cause, another upon another, another upon another, each viewing things in his own peculiar light, and attaching paramount importance to his own cause; whence arises strife, party, denunciation. The error lies in aiming remedies primarily at the *effects* of sin, which are many, rather than at the *source* of all sin, which is one; in attempting to destroy the tree of evil by lopping off branches, and pruning away excrescences, instead of laying an axe at the root. With a wisdom truly marvellous did Christ and his apostles keep a steady eye to their great work, and never did they descend to a direct interference with matters of secular and party interest, considering that if the fountain was cleansed, the streams would soon become pure of course.

The mode ordained by God, and set forth in the gospel, for healing the moral maladies of the world, is as follows.

Every man is first *to secure his own heart to God;* with his character and government he is to become well acquainted; he is to maintain a constant vital communion with him, ever cherishing the sentiment, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.' He is to become personally interested in the Savior, to learn who he is, what he has done, what he intends to do; and to commit himself to

his grace and guidance. No duty can be tantamount to this. Even a life passed in enterprises important to others, but in neglect of this duty, will encounter the fatal rebuke of him who kept the vineyard of others, but neglected his own.

His next relation, as a Christian, *is to the church.* No covenant is more sacred or binding, than that which unites a member to this body. The matrimonial covenant has upon it the seal of God; to prove faithless to it, is a sin of deep die. But this is in some respects even more sacred. It is a union to Christ publicly solemnized; a union of imperishable minds in interests of infinite moment. The matrimonial relation is dissolved at death; this endures forever. In this age of numerous associations, let us beware that none divide our affections with the church. Better a thousand times that all other associations be scattered to the winds, than that they be suffered to interfere with this. Here should ever be found the green spot, the garden of sweet spices, the delightful abode of Christian sympathies, the admiration and joy of the earth; so that all men shall exclaim, 'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. As the dews of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded his blessing, even life forevermore.'

His next duty as a Christian is, to *put forth a*

direct personal influence for the spiritual regeneration of men. So essential is this, that almost nothing is done till this is done. When you persuade a man to become temperate, you do well; when you persuade him to become a Christian, you do better. This ought ye to do, and not to leave the other undone. It is not of infinite moment that a man belong to this or that party, or that he embrace this or that political creed; that he become a Christian, is of infinite moment. Are not some of us converting men to almost everything else but religion? We must return to this primary duty, or the great wheel on which the world's salvation turns will cease to move, and all the subordinate wheels of Christian enterprise will eventually stop.

His next Christian duty is, *to sustain the instrumentalities for evangelizing the world;* the preaching of the gospel, the cause of Bibles, Missions, Education, Tracts, Sabbath Schools, the entire system of means for obeying the last injunction of the Savior, to 'go into all the world and preach his gospel to every creature.'

These are the great generic means of displacing sin and promoting our religious and civil interests. Let these be well done, and all others will follow in the right spirit and manner. Nothing is well done, but as these take the lead. Yet there are certain specific means somewhat of human device,

in subordination to these advantageously employed, of which it is next in place to speak. As the physician, while giving his main attention to the seat of disease, endeavors also to alleviate its remote outbreakings, especially when they act back with serious energy upon the source, so a subordinate attention may often wisely be given to the mitigation of certain specific forms of sin. Not that such means are ever alone adequate to remove the cause and thus effect a radical cure ; they only serve to keep the disease in abeyance, while the grand antidote has opportunity to take effect.

This is especially true of *intemperance.* The intemperate man is in a sense physically incapacitated to realize the saving power of the gospel. He is a deranged man. He must abandon his cups, or there is little hope that the gospel will ever take effect upon him. The appetite is strong, violent, incontrollable. Now there is great power in the social principle. Strengthened by the example of others, a man will perform a self-denial which he would not alone. Power there is too in a mutual promise. Hence the temperance pledge. It is a forced measure, an expedient like that of inserting a temporary wooden prop under a falling edifice, till you can get the granite under. No temperance pledges will be needed, when the gospel shall have taken full effect in the earth. At present their utility is undoubted.

Reasoning from this peculiar case, in which a state of physical derangement induced by poison unfits a man to exercise the powers of a rational moral agency, some have gone on to infer that there is a long list of particular sins which must be removed by some agency anterior to that of the gospel, to prepare its way, before it can take effect. Now although not quite sure that the gospel was of old anticipated by more than one John the Baptist, yet I object not to numerous specific societies and measures for the mitigation or removal of particular forms of sin, provided they be kept in their right relation and due subjection. I would not annihilate any of them; rather would I aid them all. But to do this most effectually, let us keep them in their appropriate sphere; let us not assign to them the place or office which is the glorious prerogative of the gospel only.

Neither do I object to the enthusiasm which the reformer of any particular vice naturally feels in his espoused object. I love to see it. It evinces an honest and engaged heart. Indeed, a man is little else than true to his own nature, who does not soon come to think that the particular sin against which he has especially set his face as a reformer, is *the* great sin that is killing the world, the parent of all other sins, and that little can be done towards saving mankind till it is first removed. But his

zeal is somewhat annoying, when it becomes so exorbitant as to require all men te revolve with him around his object, or perhaps rather around his object and himself too, or fall under his scorching rebuke. Cheerfully will we lend our aid to all good reformers, according to the appropriate measure; but when every one demands of us the same engrossing interest in his object which himself has, expects us to view things in the same light and pursue the same course with him, we find ourselves taxed quite beyond our ability.

One reformer conceives that *lewdness* is the great sin. He has ascertained that it is vastly more extensive, rife, malignant, destructive to soul and body and to our religious and social interest, than all other sins put together. All the other commandments of the decalogue depend upon the seventh. Let us then form a Seventh Commandment Society, turn our main strength against this sin till it is vanquished, then will the cause of salvation move on. Wo to the preacher, who does not lift up his voice like a trumpet against this sin, till the Achan is destroyed.

Another does not view things quite in this light. He conceives that the *profanation of the Sabbath* is the great sin to be removed. The instructions of the Bible on this point are remarkably bold and explicit. If there be any question as to the propriety of publicly exposing and attacking lewdness

in its details, respecting this there can be none. On none does the Bible denounce heavier wrath, and none is so universal in our land. Let us then have a Fourth Commandment Society. To hasten and enforce the desired consummation, let us procure six-day stages, steamboats, markets, milkmen, barbers; let us get all to the house of God; soon then will every sin die, and our religious and civil institutions will tower in pyramids of strength towards heaven. Is not the voice of inspiration unequivocal, that this is the sin whose removal ensures every blessing? 'What evil thing is this that ye do and profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath day. If thou shalt turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thy own ways, nor finding thy own pleasure, nor speaking thy own words, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.'

Another considers that the sin of *war* is greatest of all. It is a great cause of Sabbath-breaking, and the prolific cause of all conceivable evil. It

is expressly condemned by our Savior, and diametrically repugnant to the spirit of his gospel. If all men could be brought to act upon the principles of peace, soon would the full dominion of God's law follow. And how can we expect missions to prosper and religion to prevail over the earth, till at least Christian nations hoist the flag of truce and learn war no more? War has in all ages been the great impediment to the success of the gospel. Let us then have a Peace Society, put an end to all war, then will the gospel have free course.

Another conjectures that the great sin lies farther back, which engenders war and all other sins. It is the use of *fermented drinks* in the form of wine, porter, beer, cider and other similar articles not recognized in the common temperance pledge. The secret of virtue is cool blood. Wars come of lusts, and lusts come of heated blood, and heated blood comes of stimulating drinks. History instructs us that all wars are waged under this preternatural excitement. Besides, intellect is so clear and reason so bright, when the physical system is calm and cool, that we only need to remove these stimulants and men will of course perceive and obey the gospel. Let us then have a Temperance Society embracing the *comprehensive* pledge, and the highway to universal piety will be cast up.

Another, however, supposes that of all the articles that ever cursed man physically, intellectually

and morally, none is before that filthy weed called *tobacco*. That it is a most insidious and fatal poison, we all know. It creates artificial excitement, unnatural appetite, ungovernable craving for other stimulants; besides that by its very filth it directly tends to debase and pollute both body and mind. An Anti-Tobacco Society is therefore indispensable.

But says another, Experience has taught me, that *tea* and *coffee* are equally pernicious with wine and tobacco, especially to nervous temperaments. Medical books also teach us, that they contain narcotic properties, which cannot fail to operate upon the system as a slow poison. Are not some of the effects of opium produced by coffee? and what virtuous person would venture on an habitual use of opium? Who cannot learn that coffee gradually undermines the tone of the stomach, and at last plunges its votary into the horrors of dyspepsia? And do we not all know that hyson crucifies the nerves? What mean these sick head aches, nervous diseases, premature graves? Nothing should be drunk stronger than pure water. We must have an Anti-Tea-and-Coffee Society.

Another assures us that the evil does not stop here. The physiology of man plainly demonstrates that he was not made to be *carnivorous*. To say nothing of the injustice of living by the death of animals, who are entitled to live as well as we, it

is violence to our own constitution. It shortens the age of man. So did not men in the days of Methuselah. The use of animal food hastens physical maturity; urges on the vital energies to premature exhaustion; vitiates the secretions; clouds the intellect; feeds the sensual passions; and is, in short, a principal source of all vice. Let us then have an Anti-Flesh Society; let mankind be induced to come upon an exclusive vegetable diet, and soon will the abolition of all sin naturally follow.

Another asserts that *Fashionable Dressing*, is inferior to no other vice of our day. We must have a Society against this. Thousands are annually sacrificed by tight lacing and other distortions and exposures. What sin is greater than suicide, especial- to gratify vanity? Moreover, what right have we to alter and deform God's beautiful work? The expense too, the folly, the dissipation of modern fashions! Can we expect anything good, till this iniquity is removed? Does not the Bible discountenance this 'outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold or putting on apparel?' And is it not incontestable that many of the 'daughters of our Zion are haughty, and walk with extended necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go?' Let us 'take away their crescents, chains, bracelets, mufflers; their bonnets, head-bands, tablets, ear-rings; their changeable suits of apparel, mantles, wimples, crisping pins; their glasses, hoods

and vails;' — the men, too, let them be induced to abandon the slavery of fashion and pride; let the reform in dress become thorough and universal, and speedily will the end of sin come.

Now the moral character of all these, rests upon the same doctrine of utility. With the exception of two or three, there is no specific command in the Bible touching them. The simple principle is, that it is wicked to injure ourselves or others. As fast, therefore, as a practice is clearly proved to be injurious it becomes wicked. Not that sin itself changes, but in respect to points not specified in the Scriptures, whose moral character of course is determined by perceived consequences, what is sinful under one set of circumstances or one degree of light, is not always so under others. Hence the manufacturing and use of alcohol is now in this country almost universally sinful, although it was not so twenty years ago. On the same principle the habitual use of tobacco, of wine, ale, porter, cider, is now sinful to many, though not as extensively so as the use of distilled alcohol. Should increasing light make it manifest, as it perhaps will, that the use of coffee and tea and animal food is injurious, then will the use of these also become sinful to those thus enlightened. Possibly all the articles against which the sternest reformer sets himself, not only alcohol, but wine, beer, cider, coffee, tea, animal food, all but a simple vegetable diet with pure water,

will in the progress of light become universally known as injurious, and thus, among all good men, will pass into condemnation and desuetude. Surely I would be the last to lift a finger against it; if the good of mankind demands it, I would hasten the event. But as sins of this class depend upon the kind and degree of a man's light, the reformer will indulge the suggestion, that he must not make his own conscience a rule by which to measure other men's sins, and denounce all who do not come up to his mark. Let him go on patiently enlightening the minds of men in respect to the injurious tendencies of the thing he would displace, allowing members of churches to walk according to the light they have, and ministers to pursue their appropriate office of preaching the gospel; and thus, by the combined action of the gospel upon the consciences and hearts of men, and of the reformer's light upon their understandings, will both the cause of spiritual religion and of moral reform be advanced together, in the most effectual manner. In this way the liberty and union of Christian churches may be preserved, while passing through the trying ordeal of the various moral reforms of our day.

In the mean time let us also look well to the *spirit* and *manner*, with which we pursue the reformation of men; for there is a wrong as well as right way, even to do good. And can any of us do better, than to follow close to the example of

Christ ? May we then indulge an *angry* and *reproachful* spirit towards those who oppose us ? No. Christ was ever meek and forgiving ; ' when he was reviled, he reviled not again.' Like him we are ' in meekness to instruct those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God may give them repentance.' May we not assume the prerogative to *lord* it over men and gratify ambition ? No. Christ was ever humble ; the servant of all. He washed his disciples' feet. Like him we must not ' lord it over God's heritage, but be ensamples to the flock.' May we not resort to *violent* and *forced* measures, to do good ? No. We then deviate from Christ ; we rather do harm than good. Christ was ' gentle.' ' The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated.' ' The servant of the Lord must not *strive*' — indulge angry contention — ' but be *gentle* to all men.' Is it not at least allowed us sometimes to get out of patience, and to indulge in fretful complaining ? Never. Our Lord was ' patient towards all men ;' and so ought we to be. ' Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering ; forbearing one another and forgiving one another ; if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness ;

and let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also ye are called *in one body.*' Both purity and union will come of this.

And further, if we would bear forward the reformation of the world with greater certainty and speed, we must, like our Savior, preserve integrity of mind and absence of all that is *fanatical* in either spirit or manner. While pressing the principles of morality to the highest point of excellence, even to the point of sinless purity, he never fell into extravagant notions and measures; no wildness, no eccentricity, no contravening of the laws and ordinances of nature. His was a rational, dignified, calm, cheerful, holy walking before God and the world, according to the established laws of nature, the course of divine providence, and the everlasting principles of righteousness. He never cast himself down from a height, or leaped into the water, expecting a miracle to save him; although himself had wrought many miracles. He never became ascetic and morose towards social enjoyments, although himself much alone in communion with God. He never undertook to be righteous overmuch, to go *beyond* the mark of sound morality and religion, for the sake of bringing others *up to* it; he better understood human nature. He did just and only what was right, living according to the laws of nature and of God. He well knew that the wicked of his and all generations

are full of insincere cavils, never to be silenced by our yeilding to them ; that if we are too lax, they will complain of that ; if too rigid, they will complain of that ; if neither, they will complain of that. So far was he from yielding to the self-righteous and ascetic spirit of the Scribes and Pharisees, that while the most consistently and religiously temperate man in *all* things that ever lived, and the most discreet in respect to the company he visited, he yet was denounced by them as a glutton, a wine-bibber, and a companion of publicans and sinners. Nor did he deny that he ate and drank, and that too in company of irreligious persons, contrary to the notions of morality entertained by the Scribes and Pharisees ; but how did he reply to the charge ? ' To what shall I liken this generation ? It is like to children sitting in the markets and calling to their fellows and saying, We have piped to you and ye have not danced ; we have mourned to you and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say he hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a gluttonous man, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.'

If you will study the history of fanaticism, not only that of all impostors, but also that which has marred the Christian Church, produced false stan-

dards of character, and awakened a tone of denunciation and wrath, in place of meekness and love; which has even levelled nearly all evangelical piety to the ground for centuries, imposing instead thereof, pains and penances and purgatories; and if you will so far study the philosophy of our nature, as to learn the violent strength of our tendencies that way, you will appreciate the importance of the Savior's example in *this* particular also, though by most at the present day slightly valued. When you see men wise above the Bible, undertaking to be more moral, or religious, or prudent than Jesus Christ; wishing that he had sometimes done differently, as recently did a well meaning person, when he expressed a wish that Christ had not made wine and sanctioned its use at a wedding, and as another did when he thought on the whole that Christ would have done better not to have used wine at the sacramental board, you may know that the spirit of fanaticism is beginning to work, and that what begins with denouncing Jesus Christ, will not be likely to end without denouncing even his most consistent followers, and setting itself up, of course, as more righteous than all.

Following in the track of these ultra notions, an infidel of some note has recently advanced the opinion 'that Jesus Christ has done more to impede the cause of morality than any other man that ever liv-

ed; 'For' says he 'the use of animal food, and of all fermented and stimulating drinks, including coffee and tea, is, by exciting the animal propensities, at the foundation of every vice; and by countenancing the use of such things, especially the habitual use of meat, and an occasional use of wine, Jesus Christ has, by the power of his great name, and wide example, done an injury to our race which ages cannot repair.' Such is the end of fanaticism; alike at war with reason, with nature, with providence, and with Jesus Christ. It is infidelity, sometimes creeping in upon us, unsuspected, at the back door of the Church.

Would I then leave the cause of temperance to fall? God forbid. It is a glorious cause; it is of God. Rather would I place the herculean pillars of righteousness, the morality of the Bible and of Christ underneath it, and thereon let it stand forever. But do I advocate the use of stimulants? So far, and only so far, whether in the form of food or drink, as is most productive of sound health, morality, and happiness, to be determined by science and experience. Were I to speak my personal experience, I should perhaps say, the less of stimulants the better. Accordingly, seldom does anything pass my lips stronger than pure water. To myself the habitual use of tea and coffee were not less pernicious than wine. So experience taught me many years since. But shall I then

make myself a standard for all others? So did not Christ; neither will I. 'John came neither eating nor drinking.' 'The Son of man came eating and drinking.' Why this difference? Why did not John condemn Christ, or Christ John? Their constitutions, or their employments, or their circumstances were different; they each lived accordingly. 'Why then is my liberty judged by another man's conscience?' And why shall I grudge my neighbor his enjoyment of bounties congenial to him, because forsooth my own health or purse is too poor to bear it? Rather let me enjoy his enjoyment; and if I think him mistaking his best way, endeavor in the spirit of kindness to enlighten him. 'Give up your wine,' says one, 'and I will give up my New England rum.' 'Give up your coffee and tea,' says another, 'and I will give up my wine.' 'Give up your cider,' says another, 'and I will give up my ale.' 'Give up your butter,' says another, 'and I will give up my meat.' Rather let me say to all, Relinquish whatever is injurious to you, retain whatever is beneficial, and I will do the same; or if *you* will not, yet will I.

Such I believe to be the Christian way to promote temperance, and vastly more effectual than many of the forced measures to which resort is had; for there is a principle in man which repels them, and will repel them. Push such measures hard, and

many will become intemperate in self defence. Men were not made to bear the screw and the vice.

And as to social *entertainments;* do I, in referring to the conduct of Christ, undertake to advocate them. Just so far, and of such kind, as the best fulfillment of social relations, the best discharge of social duties, and the best interests of society demand; to be determined by a conscientious exercise of our experience and judgment. So did Jesus Christ. Walk firmly after his spirit and example in this and all other particulars, and you will never be intimidated to weakness, or beguiled into spleen, or befooled out of your common sense; you will not say or do a weak, or splenetic, or foolish thing; for the spirit of Christ is not a 'spirit of *fear*, but of *power* and of *love* and of a *sound mind*.' You will not 'strain at a gnat and swallow a camel;' you will not 'tithe mint and anise and omit the weighty matters;' you will not exhibit a distorted and frightful caricature of piety, as fanaticism always does; your light will shine in a completeness of character, embracing all the relations and duties of life, according to their respective importance.

When we see the warring notions of the world respecting what constitutes right character, the more numerous and warring as the world advances in speculations and philosophies and refinements and reforms, are we not convicted of the importance of one perfect character, like that of Christ,

drawn out and presented to the world in living form, to which all controversy may appeal, and to which all minds may refer? 'This is the Judge that ends the strife.' How much the example of Christ remains to be studied and copied, before the world will come under the benign reign of his gospel, we shall all do well seriously to consider.

SERMON II.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

Come we now to notice those movements for reform, which have a more directly secular and civil aspect. I enter upon this ground, not unapprised of its dangers. I am aware that the spirit of contention has descended from the higher regions of metaphysical and purely religious doctrines, to matters of more obvious and secular interest. Here all feel competent to engage, and all have feelings to enlist. My aim is simply to carry out what I believe to be a sound and important principle; in so doing to speak so plainly, as not to fail of being understood.

Some have supposed that the vice which blots the church and endangers our country before all others, is *masonry*. What more horrible than secrets, and what more profane than masonic vows? What more repugnant to republicanism? Then the useless instruments, the apron, the trowel, the idle ceremonies, the nonsense. This system must be put down, or our churches and our country will

be ruined. We must have an Anti-Masonic Society. The spirit of proscription must kindle to a flame; it must not only purify our politics, but it must come in and burn on the altars of our churches. The man who is so unfortunate as to have worn an apron some dozen years since, must forfeit a seat at the Lord's table, unless he will assume the position of a political partizan against the hated craft; and all others, who do not sympathize in the benevolent work of extermination, must be regarded as almost equally guilty.

I pretend to no opinion respecting the character of masonry, nor do I impeach the motives of those who seek its ends by violent means. Its friends generally admit, that although it has answered some serviceable ends in by gone years, its utility is now nearly or quite supersceded by other benevolent institutions. It is apparently growing old and decrepid; may its death be peaceful. Indeed the Anti-Masonic fever is evidently abating, and is giving place to another subject of still more extensive and exciting interest.

In the opinion of not a few, *slavery* is the sin, that is standing in the way of all our benevolent operations for evangelising the world. Moreover, it is a dark thunder cloud in our political sky, charged with wrath to the nation. Vain are all other attempts to do good, till this sin is removed. An Anti-Slavery Society we must have, and to it

all other things must give place. The preaching of the gospel, Bible Societies, Missionary Societies, Education Societies, Tract Societies, Sabbath School Societies, yea, even the Church itself, pastors, deacons, and all, must haste and get out of the way, or be rolled over and crushed by the burning wheels of anti-slaveryism.

Must then the great instrumentalities for evangelizing the world be neglected, till slavery is abolished? You can never abolish slavery in that way. It is only by having those interests sustained and urged onward, our hearts and hands supremely given to them, that a moral tone is sustained in the public mind by which the cause of abolitionism itself is enabled to effect any thing. To the subject of slavery we are more than willing to assign its appropriate place; but we cannot exempt it from the same law of subordination, under which we have placed all the other subjects of moral and political reform. Place any of these subjects in a relation other than that of servants in due subjection, and they will soon create divisions, throw the world into confusion, produce a false standard of Christian character, undermine the foundation of sound religion, and produce fanaticism.

A man may be all that these anti-societies can possibly make him, and yet not be a Christian. He may be anti-alcohol, to the extent of its complete abandonment from use and traffic; anti-seventh-

commandment-breaking, to the extent of the letter; anti-fourth-commandment-breaking, to the extent of his ability; anti-war, to the extent of the most scrupulous non-resistance; anti-fermented-liquors, to the extent of the most modern pledge; anti-tobacco, to the extent of proscribing the last delicious morsel; anti-tea and coffee, to the extent of pure cold-waterism; anti-animal-food, to the extent of an exact vegetable diet; anti-fashionable-dressing, to the extent of the most fastidious Quakerism; anti-mason, to the extent of a complete extermination of the obnoxious Craft from both church and state; anti-slavery, to the extent of leveling both the ecclesiastical and civil canons against slaveholders, and of abstaining from the use and traffic of all tobacco, cotton, rice, sugar, raised by slaves,—as a consistent, ultra abolitionist he must do,—all these may he be, and yet not be a Christian. In all he may be utterly destitute of the spirit of the gospel, moved by none other than selfish motives. He may be a glorious *anti*, and nothing else. Or rather, with all, he may be an anti-christian.

Now it is a law of our nature, that whenever a man sets his heart strongly to oppose an object that does not readily yield, unless he give first attention to securing and nourishing the spirit of the gospel, his zeal degenerates to fanaticism. This is enthusiasm inflamed by hatred. Suppose, for instance,

that after this manner a man gives his whole soul to the immediate abolition of slavery. It soon completely fills the eye of his mind, and engages his entire heart. He begins to wonder why all men do not see and feel as he does. He is conscious of a wonderful revolution within him, since he espoused the true doctrine. His heart is enlarged, his tongue loosed, he is breathing a fresh exhilerating atmosphere in a clear upper sky. He is confident that he is exactly right, and that all who do not sympathize with him are in awful guilt. Especially pastors and churches, what can they mean? Let no preacher be tolerated, who does not forthwith leave his appropriate work and take up arms in the crusade of instant abolitionism. Let no church extend charity or communion to any man sustaining the relation of master, however he came into this relation, or by whatever necessity he retains it. Let all who refuse to denounce him as a man-stealer, be themselves denounced. This, he is confident, is the Christian way to abolish slavery.

But he finds a powerful class of minds, somewhat accustomed to think as well as he, who do not see things in his light. They are quite as certain that his is not the Christian way, as he is that it is. They as truly believe that he is setting back the cause of emancipation, as he does that he is setting it forward. He complains of

persecution. He thinks he is suffering for righteousness sake; although perhaps the amount of his persecution, is simply to be let alone. But the idea of suffering for righteousness sake, as all illustrious reformers have done, spurs him on to an uncontrollable state of mind. He is not conscious of it. He thinks himself calm as a summer morning, open to conviction, full of nought but pure love, when the spirit of fanaticism is speaking in his eye, his countenance, his language, and it is difficult to divine whether he most loves the slave or hates the master; whether he most loves the cause he thinks to promote, or hates those who he thinks oppose him. By no means do I assert the actual existence of this in the advocates of abolition; I only state a general law of human nature, whose illustration in some actual examples might be reasonably expected. If such there really be, they will probably take umbrage at what I have said, and thus furnish the illustration of the principle.

An evil that has existed almost from the creation, and for many years engaged the profoundest wisdom and philanthropy of statesmen and Christians, is not of course to receive full attention in a single address. I crave your continued indulgence a moment longer to the subject of slavery, while I touch simply its relation to Christian churches. The time is nearly gone by for at-

tempting to bring masonry into churches, as a test of communion; though in its day it unspiritualized, divided, lacerated numerous churches, whose wounds still cease not to bleed. Slavery has now come to take the place of masonry in this respect, or to go hand in hand with it. Efforts will doubtless be made to push it into all the northern churches, those even in which a slave owner never was or will be, and most of whose members know next to nothing about the subject. They can by it only be diverted from their proper work, agitated, troubled, divided. But I mistake the wisdom and purity of these churches, if many of them admit it.

Proscriptive abolitionism starts with the doctrine, that under all circumstances to be a slave-owner, is a *sin*, even the sin of man-stealing. I deny the doctrine. Much as I loathe slavery, both as a system and in its particulars, I conceive this doctrine to be ultra and absurd. Some would place slavery and the use of alcohol on the same ground. Even if the civil relations of the use of alcohol and of slavery were the same, and if slavery were among us at the north, as the use of alcohol is, that we could see, understand, and intelligently deal with it, and if no injury could accrue to the spiritual interests of any from their immediate emancipation, as none could from the immediate disuse of alcohol, it would not follow that slavery has the same claims to be made a test

of communion with us, that the use of alcohol has.

The scriptural terms of communion, those on which congregationalism is based, are credible evidence of piety and agreement in Christian doctrines. No person in whom those conditions are found, have we a right to exclude, for Christ does not exclude him. The church has no authority to inflict punishment. This is not her appropriate office. Temporary suspensions from communion, proceed on the ground, that, in case of a breach of covenant, evidence of Christian character is suspended, till the delinquent repents and makes confession. The instant he does this, the church is bound to receive him again to her communion. Those churches which have determined to exclude persons using or trafficing in alcohol, have proceeded upon the assumption that so much light is now shed upon the destructive nature of that article, that to persist in encouraging its use, is to evince the predominance of sensual appetite or of avarice over Christian principle, and thus to be without credible evidence of Christian character. Respecting this fact, however, churches are not agreed; consequently some admit this test, while others do not.

No civil laws exist against the disuse of alcohol. Such laws do exist against emancipation; and it is a standing canon of the gospel, set up as an ev-

erlasting bulwark against radicalism, that we are to be subject to the civil laws; while we put forth a Christian influence upon community to make them better, if they need it. It is in this way, that we are to operate against the legalised system of slavery; not by calling on our southern brethren to transgress the laws under which they live, and excommunicating them if they do not. Unless we have a specific and express command from God to the contrary, the general course of Christian duty towards both natural and civil laws is established and plain; it is subjection.

Neither has the church a right to legislate over the civil authorities, nor have the civil authorities a right to legislate ecclesiastically over the church. Unless therefore the civil assume the place of religious authorities, even if laws be not such as some Christians might wish, it is yet our duty to render civil subjection to them, in a Christian manner, till we can by lawful means alter them, or remove our relation to them.

Are we then to obey laws, if they require us to *sin?* No laws, either of nature or of men, can make it our duty to sin. They cannot make it our duty to violate the generic moral law of God, or any of his express specific commands. Still civil laws may be such as to require us to do what, but for them, it might be sin to do. God looks upon the heart. He legislates over the

spirit. One law governs his empire. The generic law of love is developed to the eyes of the world, partly in acts of external conformity to certain rules modified by circumstances. Take for instance the command to keep the Sabbath holy. The *spirit* of that command, nothing can make it right for us to violate. Ordinarily it is a violation of it, to labor on the Sabbath day. Such is the letter. 'Thou shalt not do any work.' But in a case of sickness, or of life and death by the unavoidable laws of nature, or in case of being in the navy or army, under a system of government demanding service on penalty of death, it is no necessary violation of the spirit and intention of the divine command, to labor or to travel on that day. It is a case of compulsion by the laws of nature or the civil laws under which the person exists, to which he may submit with a heart true to God; and to which it is ever his Christian *duty* to submit, till he can lawfully extricate himself. It is believed that no person who has profouudly studied the spirit of the Christian Scriptures will controvert this position. It is only applying to morals the common sense principle, which long since passed into proverb, that 'circumstances alter cases.' It is a very different affair when human authorities attempt to legislate directly over a man's religion, and require him to be an idolater, or an adulterer, or a liar, thereby

to test his allegiance to God. In the former case he may think the civil authorities err, in requiring the ship to sail or the army to march upon the Sabbath, and regret that they do not view the matter in the light that he does; but in the latter case he knows that their express object is, to make him renounce the service of God. They have set themselves up in the place of God, they have exalted themselves above him, and the question now is, which shall receive his homage. Duty is then plain. By not thus distinguishing between the doings of civil magistrates, legislating simply in their appropriate sphere over the civil interests of state, and undertaking to legislate out of their appropriate sphere over religion, some have supposed that every man is at liberty to set up his own peculiar religious notions against the civil laws. This would inevitably destroy all civil government, and with it all religion of course. The spirit of enlightened piety condemns it.

Apply now the principle to the relation of our slave-holding brethren to the civil laws which forbid emancipation. These laws are not religious edicts, put forth to test the allegiance of men to God. Their framers believe that slavery is Scriptural and right, just as the framers of the other laws supposed, believe that to require their subjects to sail the ship or to do military service upon the Sabbath, is right; nor is it the Christian way

to convince them to the contrary, to encourage insurrection and contempt of civil authority. We may think differently from most of our southern brethren, respecting the wrongfulness of slavery. Some of our southern brethren themselves may think differently; but not till by a regular Christian process can they effect the desired change in the laws, are they exonerated from the duty of civil subjection to them. Still may they and ought they to treat their slaves in a Christian manner, in such manner as to fulfil towards them the law of love, in such manner as best to promote their temporal and everlasting interests. They owe a duty to their civil authorities, to obey them; to their civil laws, to make them better as fast as they lawfully can, if they need improving; to their slaves, in the mean time, to seek their highest good. All these things they can do. I know an excellent minister of the gospel, who is the owner of several slaves, all pious, all converted under his ministry, all members of his church, all loved by him as children, all loving him as their temporal and spiritual guardian and father; some of them invalids and dependant upon him for support. Are we then to anathematize him if he does not judge it to be his duty to emancipate them, in defiance of law, and circumstances, and consequences? Members of his own church, whom he has begotten in Christ, and is covenant-

ed to watch over, shall he consign them to the ruthless hands of avarice and lust, to thrice miserable slavery for life? Such is the case with many of our Christian brethren at the south. Never, till we are prepared to bid everlasting adieu to the Bible and to common sense, can we believe it to be our duty to exclude from our communion such brethren. Christianity knows no law superior to this, to do to others what is for their best interest, temporal and eternal. And we know of no righteous authority for excluding a Christian brother, who is faithfully endeavoring to obey that law.

Other important reasons exist, why anti-masonry and anti-slavery, should not come into churches as tests of communion. They excite feelings not merely religious, but also of a secular and political character. Anti-masonry appeals to the strong feelings of republicanism, jealousy of cabalism, dread of mischief in the dark against our liberties. Minds susceptible to such appeals become the tools of ambitious politicians, and thus is created a profane alliance of church and state.

Anti-slavery appeals to a still stronger, more excitable and general feeling. New England blood boils with indignation against every name and likeness of oppression, for on no subject is feeling so easily excited as upon this. A man whose soul is as parched as August, or as icy as January, up-

on other subjects, has both moisture and heat enough upon this. Any speaker who undertakes to stir up the passions of a common audience upon this subject, has an easy task before him. All this being associated with religion, many well meaning Christians will be drawn in with men of secular ambition, to constitute a civil party. A political wave will thus be put in motion, for aspiring demagogues to ride to glory on. These tendencies are denied by many, unforeseen by more, but they are unquestionable. Those churches over which proscriptive abolitionism assumes dominion, will become political churches. Zeal they will have, burning zeal, but mingled with unhallowed fires; a zeal not purely to promote the spiritual interests of men, but to support the political candidate of a party.

In respect to terms of communion then, as well as all other matters, let Christian churches rest immovably on the foundation of Christ and his apostles. She wants nothing more, nothing less, than naked scriptural ground. Thus and thus only will her liberty and union be made perfect and perpetual. Her great essential work is, to put forth a spiritual blessing upon the world. Let her do this faithfully, and as fast as any practice or any civil law is ascertained to be hostile to the welfare of mankind, the spirit of the gospel in the hearts of men, not ecclesiastical jurisdiction,

will place it aside. Some excellent Christians believe that to do military service, others that to use tobacco, others that to make use of fermented drinks, others that to eat animal food, others that to indulge in the narcotic stimulants of coffee and tea, are, or soon will be, sins of sufficient die to exclude men from the communion, as sincerely as the abolitionist or the anti-mason believes this of slave-holding, or of being an adhering mason.

Permit every reformer to bring his cause into the churches to be legislated upon, and there are enough to keep them all in a perpetual broil. Now comes masonry, next slavery, next war; now comes the wine and cider question, next the use of tobacco, next of tea and coffee, next of animal food; at length the question comes up, how much men must give, next how much they must do, and so on without end. They will stop, they gravely tell us, where sin stops, if they can ascertain where that is. All this is very well to be discussed, and preached, in proper place and measure, but not to be introduced into churches as a basis of discipline. This is not the way to purify churches. In the multiplicity of opinions, views and disputes, their unity, peace and purity would be destroyed, and their moral power over the world would cease forever.

Reformers are always to act in subordination, never to assume the reins of government. Put

the reins of church and state into the hands of every innovator, and where would the world soon be? Anarchy and wild disorder would become universal. Like the element of fire, reformers are excellent servants; but unless superhuman, they are dangerous masters. Their place is subjection to civil authorities, their way to act upon the world is, by diffusing the light and influence of their doctrines and examples, impelled always by a benevolent spirit. Such was the greatest Reformer that ever blessed the world; such have the few genuine reformers been. They have risen upon the earth, like suns of a calm clear light, waxing brighter and brighter, eclipsing other orbs only by their own superior illumination; sending a benign influence and a sweet savor of their goodness down to distant generations; while thousands of false reformers, like fiery meteors blazing for a season, have risen up to make angry and ambitious war on all surrounding bodies, have amazed and agitated society for a season, and then passed away to their own darkness and oblivion. By their fruits ye shall know them. Of all such reformers as God approves and as bless mankind, it is characteristic, to be 'subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness to all men.'

The spirit of the gospel allows no professed reformer to rend the true churches of Christ, upturn states, subvert the order of society and the constitution of Providence ; it would pour its holy blessing into them all. It does not set men to quarreling with their condition, but to mending their hearts and lives. It teaches us that to be benevolent, contented, happy, faithful, in the circumstances in which we are, is the highest excellence, and the true preparation for something better. Hence the spirit of the gospel and the spirit of radicalism are very unlike. The one builds up, the other pulls down. The one aims directly to improve the *character* of men, as means to their more exalted condition, by which both objects are finally gained ; the other aims directly to exalt the *condition* of men, as means of their higher well being, by which both objects are finally lost.

Far be it from me to discountenance the most intense *zeal*, in urging forward a good cause. An excellent writer has well said, "Enthusiasm is not a term of *measurement* but of *quality*." "Where there is no error of imagination, no misjudging of realities, no calculations which reason condemns, there is no enthusiasm, even though the soul may be on fire with the velocity of its movement in pursuit of its chosen object." Neither would I place the supreme excellence in *caution*

Some men are so very cautious, that they do nothing. They would not venture to lift a finger in any moral enterprise, lest they should disturb a lion. As little has the world to hope from men of nought but caution, as it has much to fear from men of nought but zeal. The most valuable reformers are those equally and largely possessed of both. And yet some headlong spirits seem sometimes to be needed, to go forward and trouble the elements, and compel indolent wisdom to wake up and attend to them. The times, in which we live, call not only for caution and prudence, but also for boldness and decision.

In conclusion, let us glance at the civil prospects of our country. The restless spirit of which I have spoken, extensively pervades our civil institutions. Perhaps it is nothing strange. In a country of free minds, just emancipated from oppressive systems, nourished up amid the hard rocks, the invigorating skies, the bold and wild scenery of America; ardent, active, enterpising; it was perhaps to be expected, that many would rush to extremes as remote as possible from old institutions and measures. The tendency of human sentiment to vibrate from one extreme to another is proverbial. Once it was all subordination, now it is all resistance; once the throne must be worshipped, now every man may worship himself; once institutions were all infallible, now they are

all totally wrong ; once man must do nothing else but what seemed good in the eyes of the king, now they may do nothing else but what seemeth good in their own eyes. I would avoid these extremes, believing that truth and interest lie between them. I hate oppression, I also hate violence. My feelings are entirely republican ; I think the gospel republican. I believe that governments are for men, and not men for governments ; yet I abhor radicalism. I think the gospel condemns it. I would not put forth the hand of violence, in accomplishing even a desirable reform ; I believe there is a more excellent way.

Our present danger is not that of leaning towards reverence and subjection, but the opposite. Sanguine temperaments and impatient spirits must have speedy vent ; and it may probably be expected, that such will sweep the land with a heavy tempest setting towards revolution, and putting the stability of our institutions to a severe test. For it is notorious in all history, that when once a mind has lost its proper balance on subjects of general and strong interest, nothing usually avails to restore it, till its power of excitement has had opportunity to exhaust itself. Argument and discussion cannot stop it ; increased knowledge cannot stop it ; — indeed intelligence often only adds to the impetuosity of its movements, as a planet breaking from its orbit will go off with a momen-

tum proportioned to its size. When a popular excitement is on, there is less of reason and more of passion than the intelligence of the community would authorize us to expect. Most minds go with the current. A current is now setting towards revolutionary measures. In its sweep, it will embrace, along with many ardent Christians, whose zeal is not wisely tempered, a numerous class of ecclesiastical and political malcontents and aspirants; these will rush on together in a course of reckless adventure, checked by nothing but the exhaustion of their propelling forces.

To the cautious observer of human nature and of current tendencies, it is believed that this remark will not savor too much of dubious prophecy. The spirit of man, when strongly excited, is a very boisterous element. It then makes shipwreck of sound common sense; it despises prudence; it is blind to consequences. And is not the passion for excitement increasing? Are not many becoming morbidly fond of luscious intoxicating appeals to their feelings, respecting the cruelty of oppression, the glory of unbounded liberty, the transcendent excellence of equal rights and privileges; the folly and baseness of all that is past, the wisdom and beauty of all that is forth-coming? Is there not a tendency to set laws at defiance, to annul penalties, to disparage civil authorities, to break up the constitution of society,

to get rid of all government? Is there not also, with many, a growing hostility to everything old? old laws? old institutions? old doctrines? old men? Change, change, of some kind, for better or worse, is eagerly sought. What observing mind can fail to see the convulsive sentiment heaving up, in various forms? 'No matter for consequences; we are not responsible for them. Let our national constitution be demolished, our union be dissolved, our ecclesiastical and civil fathers be silenced, our venerable magistrates of frosty locks be denounced, our institutions of learning be abandoned, our churches be rent and destroyed, for oppression, folly, pusillanimity and sin, are in them all.' Let ambitious men, who thus think and speak, continue to add such fuel to a numerous class of excitable and jealous minds, and we may behold a mass of furious passions let loose and boiling in the bosom of our country as a great chaldron.

Yet we are not prepared seriously to apprehend from this source any fatal disaster. These excitements and ferments are the natural ebullitions of youthful, ardent, inexperienced republicanism; give them vent, and they will work harmlessly off. In the mean time, let every just occasion of complaint be put away. Let the welfare of every man be faithfully promoted. Especially let all Christians, whether in office, or out of office, whether high or low, whether at the south or the

north, of whatever name or sect, a slave-holder or a non-slaveholder, GIVE FIRST ATTENTION TO SECURING AND ACTING OUT TOWARDS ALL MEN THE BENEVOLENT SPIRIT OF HIS DIVINE MASTER. This will perpetuate and bless our churches and our nation, in all their interests; nothing else can. Would we enlarge, unite, and bless the churches, this is the way. Would we bring to an end all those public, national, legalized iniquities, which have gone up to heaven to invoke upon us the burning bolts of deserved wrath, this is the way. This spirit is the salt of the earth and the light of the world. It has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. It promotes solid growth in all that is excellent in character, all that is valuable in intellect, all that is useful in action. It makes good rulers and good subjects, good masters and good servants, good teachers and good pupils, holy churches, sound politics, glorious nations. Let it increase and assume full dominion, and perfect liberty and union, in both church and state, will reign over our country, and over the world.

Let the friends of religion and humanity consider this, and ponder well their duty. We live not only in a country, but in an age of extraordinary enterprise. A mighty spirit of action is gone out. The world is waking up and rushing rapidly towards some consummation. Science, arts, poli-

tics, morals, religion, are all heaving and agitating the minds of men. What is to control and guide the moving elements to a happy result, but the spirit of the gospel, living and acting in its friends? To them are these great interests entrusted. If they descend from their lofty position, if they secularize Christianity, and profane its sacred institutions; if they prove faithless to their vital relations to God, the Church, the spiritual renovation of men, the evangelizing of the world; if they become negligent of the doctrines and destitute of the spirit of the gospel; if they leave the great work of the spiritual regeneration of men, and give themselves absorbingly up to every exciting subject that comes along; to disputes, contentions, alienations, divisions, it demands no prophetic tongue to announce our doom. Increasing excitements and animosities will at length produce a rending and breaking up of all established institutions; this will of course be followed by a brief reign of anarchy, this by a dominion of spiritual and civil despotism, and this attended by a gloomy night of ignorance, sin, wo, setting back the predicted reign of the gospel perhaps for centuries.

But we anticipate better things. The day-spring from on high hath visited our nation; the sun of righteousness hath risen upon us, with healing in his wings, and we trust he will go forth

in his strength, till every cloud in our sky shall be overborne by his glories. Only let *Christians be true to their duty*, as above defined, and we cannot believe that these churches, nourished by prayer and acting under the holy impulses of humanity and religion, that these institutions, founded on the principles of religious and civil liberty, that this nation of Bibles and missions and Sabbath Schools, encompassing the earth with its blessings, are all to be sacrificed to the spirit of darkness and misrule. There is a voice that once said to the raging elements, 'Peace, be still,' and they obeyed. That voice still lives. Over and above all, it will be heard, it will prevail.

We may thus look for increasingly pure and powerful revivals of religion over our land, bringing thousands and millions under the spirit of the gospel. Through the ascendency of this spirit, with increase of light, may we look for the decline and final termination of those vices, which are the bane of religion, and the scourge and disgrace of our nation; for temperance in the place of drunkenness, for purity in the place of licentiousness, for a sanctified Sabbath, where now it is profaned, and for many salutary changes of opinion and practice, respecting the best mode and end of living. We may look for a vast increase of religious and secular knowledge, of Bibles, preaching, schools, all the instrumentalities for elevating the

intellect and reforming the heart. We may look for improved politics, wiser laws, better rulers. We may look for the end of all slavery.

We will seek the elevation and happiness of the colored race, whether in America or Africa. We love them as brethren, we love them as our own complexion, we love them as immortal beings; we mourn their debased and enslaved condition in America, and their still more debased and enslaved condition in Africa; we give our hearts and labors, so far as we can, to redeem that unhappy race from the thraldom of many centuries, and place them in honor among Christian nations. We love all our brethren engaged in their behalf; and although some may differ from us in judgment respecting the most Christian and effectual way to do them good, yet whenever they manifest the spirit of the gospel, we will never impeach the excellence of their intentions.

In a word, we may thus look for the universal dominion of Him, who is predicted to become 'the desire of all nations.' To Him may our nation be given, and his may it be, while the sun and moon endure. May his spirit be enthroned in the hearts of both rulers and subjects. Far be the day, when our magistrates shall cease to be honored, our laws to be obeyed, our institutions to be sustained, by the strong voice of an intelligent and Christian people. Our Churches, may they

be abiding as Messiah's throne. Our Union, while earth remains, may it stand, waving its bright banner in sight of all nations, a signal of redemption and liberty to the world. Here may our children rise up in long succession, to honor the memory of their fathers. Unborn generations of America! Ye thronging millions, destined to people these vast regions, and walk over our sleeping dust, ye are the objects of our hopes, our prayers, our labors! May the blessings we enherit descend to you with increase. Here may you enjoy righteous laws, wise government, pure religion, LIBERTY AND UNION, till the sun shall forget to shine, till the last star shall fade; till the archangel's trump shall announce the end of time, and earth give place to heaven.

SERMON III.

CHRISTIAN DUTIES TO CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

ROM. 13 : 1. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God : the powers that be are ordained of God.

It is manifest, that the universe must have a HEAD. Order, gradation, rule, subjection, are Heaven's first law, pervading not less the moral than the natural world, and essential to virtue and happiness. The supreme head is GOD. He is the source of all *natural* power, the self-existent and only Potentate — all subordinate energy being derived from him, and by him sustained. He is also the source of all *moral* power, the only uncreated and supreme Excellence — all subordinate moral virtue springing from him the fountain, and being by him promoted among his creatures. He is consequently the head of all government : for government is the union and emanation of natural and moral power, for the promotion of righteous conduct. Hence 'there is no power but of God ; the powers that be, are ordained of God.'

Some theorists would resolve all society into its *elements*, and construct a social system *de novo*, to be founded merely on what they consider the *original* rights of men. Allying this theory to atheistic principles, philosophical speculators have gone on to advance doctrines radically subversive of all that supports civil government. They suppose men thrown together by accident, sustaining no obligatory civil relation till they voluntarily assume it. But finding mutual regulations convenient, they agree to adopt some form of government, not recognizing, however, any higher sanction than their own pleasure.

Not to insist that this is, and ever must be, mere speculation — such a case never actually occurring — according to this theory government *originates* with men; its existence or non-existence is at their rightful option, and to them only are rulers responsible. Every subject is an independent unit. All moral obligation to civil obedience being deduced *a pactis* — from the compact — the same that *built*, may also *destroy*. It is only for all or a majority to agree that they *will* not be governed, and they have perfect *right* not to be governed. Every man may do what is right in his own eyes.

It is a true doctrine well expressed, that 'there is and mnst be in all governments a supreme, irresistible, absolute, uncontrolled *authority*, in which the *jura summi imperii*, or the rights of

sovereignty, reside.' In republican governments, so far as merely human agencies and relations are concerned, they reside in the people. But whence the obligation of the *people*, and to what authority are *they* amenable? Is there no authority, no sanction higher than themselves?

Now while it is true that governments are for men and not men for governments, it is *not* true that governments *originate* with men and have no higher sanction than their own pleasure.

CIVIL GOVERNMENTS ARE OF DIVINE APPOINTMENT. They were instituted by God himself in the earliest age, and perpetuated and enjoined by his special authority. *Civil* relations are of divine constitution, as truly as are the *domestic* and *social* relations; they are *born into the world with us*, as truly as are our relations to parents or to property; hence, in contemplating our original rights, we can no more divest ourselves of the one relation than of the other. If it is of divine ordinance, that by your birth you are brought into relation to family, and to secular interests, constituting a domestic and social state, from which certain privileges accrue to you, and to which you owe certain duties; not less is it of divine ordinance, that by your birth you are brought into relation to civil government, from which certain privileges accrue to you, and to which you owe certain duties. If, therefore, when you prove false

to your *domestic* and *social* relations, you resist the ordinance of God, not less do you, when you prove false to your *civil* relations. 'Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. Wherefore, ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake' — not only to avoid the wrath of the civil power, but also for the sake of conscience towards God. Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor. Owe no man anything — no grudge, ill-will, envy, — on account of his power or station — 'but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.' Such is the law of Christianity as applied to our civil relations; totally repugnant to the selfish, restive, revolutionary spirit.

The doctrine that denies the divine sanction of civil government, and only inculcates human rights as the original property of individuals, apart from the civil relation in which Providence has placed them, is the doctrine of atheistic radicalism; the doctrine which overthrew the French nation, and more perhaps than any other cause endangers our own. Talk we of *abstract* rights, and *primitive* rights? What have they to do in a theory of government founded on *social* rights? Mr. Burke has remarked in language of sound moral

science, 'The metaphysical rights of men entering into common life, like rays of light which pierce into a dense medium, are by the laws of nature refracted from their straight line. Indeed in the gross and complicated mass of human passions and concerns, the *primitive* rights of man undergo such a variety of refractions and reflections, that it becomes absurd to talk of them as if they continued in the simplicity of their *original* direction.'

It was a sage observation of a trans-Atlantic statesman, 'that the American people, though in many respects a spirited and noble race, have one capital fault; *they never know where to stop.*' We have in this country reacted strongly upon the oppressive systems of Europe; we have pushed in the opposite direction nearly or quite as far as we can go, without sundering the body politic, and sacrificing our governmental relations. It is time that we begin to think more of individual *sacrifices* to the general good and less of individual *rights;* more too must we think of the *sacredness* of our duty to civil government *as an institution of God.*

But if some should still deny that justice can *demand* an infringement of individual rights for the public good, maintaining that it is every man's lawful privilege to stand apart from society, if he choose, giving and receiving nothing; and hence,

that civil compacts are a matter of mere human *expediency*, for the promotion of individual good, still they cannot escape from the duty to government on which we shall insist; for, *expediency* and *right*, elementarily and essentially considered, are the same. The great Roman statesman and philosopher labored well at this point in his De Officiis, touching the *honestum* and the *utile*, and the tone of Cicero's morality on this subject in many respects approximates to that of the Bible. The essence of divine doctrine on this subject is, —That which best promotes the greatest good, is *right;* the same is *expedient.* Whatever is right, is always expedient; whatever is inexpedient, is always wrong. Some distinguish between right and expediency, considering that to be *right* which God has expressly *commanded*, and that to be *expedient* which we are left to *infer* in the exercise of our discretionary powers. It is a distinction often important to be made, which these terms thus used denote; but this view does not penetrate and comprehend the essential morality of the subject. Whatever is essentially right, is right before God commands it; right because it is *benevolent;* that is, because it promotes the greatest good. The same makes a thing right, which is left to our discretion. God himself, in all his commands and doings, acts upon the same principle which he requires us to act upon — benevolence.

There is no *moral* difference between what God has expressly commanded, and what we are left to infer in the filling up of the details of his command; the only difference is, that if we have full confidence in the wisdom and benevolence of God, what he has expressly commanded *we know* is for the greatest good, but respecting what depends upon our own discretion, we have less assurance. Yet in either case we are equally bound to do right — do what God judges, and therefore commands, and also what *we* judge, in the faithful exercise of our discretion in things left to our judgment, is promotive of the highest good. Not even an infidel can deny this, unless he is prepared to deny all the obligations of benevolence, and maintain that every man has as good right to injure as to benefit his fellow men. It is not *natural* but *civil* liberty of which we are to speak, when speaking of the rights of man in society. 'To do what we will,' says Dr. Paley, 'is *natural* liberty. To do what we will, consistently with the interests of the community to which we belong, is *civil* liberty; that is to say, the only liberty to be desired in a civil state.' So that, whether you maintain that God is or is not at the head of civil government — that his express authority is or is not binding upon us to promote it — still, if you admit the importance of civil government to the greatest good of mankind, and the binding nature

of the divine law to promote that good, you must admit the moral claims of civil government upon us. Whether, therefore, you adopt the theory of Locke, that the moral claims of government rest upon the social compact ; or of Paley, that they rest upon the will of God as collected from expediency ; or whether you admit the position we have now assumed, in either case, you come to the same result, though by a different rout. On the surer ground, however, does civil government rest, when, in addition to its authority deduced *a pactis*, or from its perceived *utility*, it has the *direct and express authority of* God to sustain it.

I have no political theory to maintain respecting the best form of government ; and if I had, this were not the place to propose it. Neither do I espouse any political party. On account of my profession, I consider it my duty, as far as possible, to stand aloof from party politics ; yet am I not politically exiled or disfranchised. I sustain the same relations to civil government with my fellow citizens of other callings ; I have the same interests to be saved or sacrificed, and the same political rights. These, however, I consider it my duty to waive or to assume, as the interests of religion may seem to demand. But I feel a *professional* obligation, to inculcate upon my fellow citizens what I conceive the Bible teaches respecting your duties to civil government. Such is my intention. I invoke your attention to a plain

scriptural view of the duties you owe to our nation.

It is the duty of *all magistrates*, from the highest to the lowest, to exercise their function *as the responsible agents* of God, supremely seeking his glory in the welfare of his creatures. 'They are the *ministers of God* to them for *good*.' They are amenable to their fellow men, but first and supremely to God. He would have them faithfully seek the good of those over whom his providence has placed them. If they do otherwise, and abuse their trust, to selfish and iniquitous ends, they deserve and will ultimately receive the wrath of God and the rebuke of men. They are not required to disregard their own interest, but so to identify it with the public interest, over which they are the appointed guardians, as always to be actuated in their official doings by public and benevolent, never by private and selfish motives. A self-seeker in the person of a public guardian, is the just abhorrence of both God and man. A public magistrate ought to have a *public soul;* and if he cannot or will not expand it to the extent of the public interest, with whose guardianship he is honored, he ought forthwith to retreat back from the honors of public life within the circumference of his own little self.

While it is the duty of rulers perfectly to *fill*, it is equally their duty *never to transgress* their

prescribed limits. All but absolutely despotic governments have different departments to balance the power. The legislative, executive, and judicial departments of our government, extending downwards from the national government to that of States and subordinate portions of States, are clearly defined, and the powers intrusted to all offices in each expressly limited. To trespass upon these limits, is to violate law and thus resist the ordinance of God; for rulers as well as subjects may be law-breakers; and whenever they do thus trespass, they not only have no right to claim obedience to their assumed prerogatives, but they are liable to be punished. When rulers fill and only fill the offices assigned them, agreeably to the constitution or charter of the body politic in which they act, then and only then do they govern lawfully, then and only then are their acts and doings obligatory on the people.

In framing laws, it is their duty to have supreme regard to the law of God, while also they are to respect the pleasure of their constituents in the manner and degree prescribed; and in case of conflict between their understanding of the divine will and the prescribed human will, they ought in good faith and conscience to decline serving; — for while a civil ruler ought *never* to go against the law of God, he ought also never to play a trick upon his constituents. The one is treason

against God; the other against men, and is subversive of public confidence. All human laws should be only carrying out in detail and applying the great law of God, that law which aims terror and destruction to wickedness, and protection and blessing to goodness. This is the rule by which all legislators are morally bound to abide. When acting agreeably to the will of God, 'rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.'

In judging, expounding, and executing law, magistrates are required to be *impartial* — to show no respect to persons on account of wealth, rank, consanguinity, or prejudice; to look rather to the spirit than the letter of law; jealously to guard the interests of the poor and the helpless; to deliver the oppressed; to do for all men under all circumstances as they would righteously wish others to do for them in the same; that thus, as 'the ministers of God for good,' they may cause the laws to bear equally and benevolently on all men. 'It is not good to *have respect to persons* in judgment.' 'Judge *righteously* between every man and his brother and the stranger that is with you.' 'Thus saith the Lord, execute judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, and do no wrong; do no violence to the stranger, to the fatherless, nor to the widow, neither shed innocent blood.' 'To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sac-

rifice.' 'Loose the bands of wickedness, undo the heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free, break every yoke — then shall thy light break forth as the morning and thy righteousness as the noonday.' Such are the duties of all rulers, whether in power by inheritance or by election.

In a republican government, like ours, it is the duty of every man to do whatever he lawfully can *to procure the election of competent and righteous men to office.* If we regard the instructions of the Bible, we shall elevate men of this description to all our public stations, from the supreme magistrate of the nation down to the lowest town officer; and to do otherwise, we shall consider a great wickedness threatening the sure wrath of God upon a people. Said Jethro to the great lawgiver of Israel, 'Hearken now to my voice, I will give thee counsel and God shall be with thee. Be thou for the people towards God, that thou mayest bring the cause to God. And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them the way in which they must walk, and the work that they must do. Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people *able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness*, and place *such* over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties and rulers of tens; and let them judge the people at all seasons. And it shall be that any great

matter they shall bring to thee, but every small matter they shall judge. So shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and *all this people shall also go to their place in peace.* So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and *did all that he had said.* And Moses *chose able men* out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all seasons. The hard cases they brought to Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.' Such were the instructions and such the rulers divinely sanctioned, under the reign of the greatest and best of rulers. In subsequent periods of Jewish history and in more popular forms of government, whenever the people became negligent, or of depraved practice in the elevation of their rulers, preferring unprincipled or weak men, God turned his indignation against them. For it was a perpetual and most sacred injunction of God, it was on the dying lips of Israel's most holy king, '*He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.*' Of course, all who by neglect or mal-suffrage allow or aid the elevation of bad or weak men to office, are guilty of sin against God, and of treason against the state.

When we notice the surprising looseness of sentiment and practice prevalent among us on this subject, the indifference of many to the character of our rulers, and even the preference of some for bad men, well may we be alarmed. 'When the righteous are in authority the people rejoice; but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.' 'Wo unto thee, O land, when thy king is a child.' 'The wicked walk on every side when vile men are exalted.' 'Judgment is turned into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock;' for then 'is judgment turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off, truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.' Rulers are 'the ministers of God,' in popular governments presented to him by the subjects, to rule over them; will you then present to him unrighteous men for this important trust? Will you, in the use of your elective franchise, have respect to party spirit, party politics, selfish passions, private ends, rather than the cause of righteousness and the good of the nation? You can hardly do a greater sin. The sentiment ought to be sounded louder through the land and impressed on every conscience, Universal suffrage, righteously exercised, is one of the greatest of human blessings; abused, one of the greatest of curses. Monarchy itself is better than democracy, unless virtue and discretion preside at the polls.

Mistake not my meaning. I am not advocating an exclusive election of professedly religious men; for it often happens that a man not professing religion, yet of moral honesty and political integrity, may possess important qualifications for an office which no other attainable man possesses. But in our republican government, in which few plenary civil powers are vested in the hands of public officers, integrity of heart is more important than greatness of intellect; for vast interests often depend upon the exercise of the benevolent principle in ways not obvious, and in which men cannot be called to account. In nearly and perhaps all the incumbents of our public offices, the great thing to be sought is Christian principle. Indeed, without this, other qualifications often only render men in office the more dangerous. What are wit, learning, eloquence, and natural wisdom, uncontrolled by benevolence, when exalted to stations of political trust, but instruments of danger to the people? Knowledge is power to do evil, as well as good. In selecting a candidate for office, no inquiries should supersede these. — Is he a truly *good* man? Does he fear God and seek the best interests of his country? Is he ever found on the side of all good measures and institutions? Is he a 'terror to evil doers and a praise to them that do well?' Does he give his influence in support of temperance; of the Christian Sabbath; of sound

morality ; in favor of whatever blesses and against whatever afflicts humanity ? Or is he in the day of trial a cringing and mercenary tool of popular favor ? Can you *depend* upon his integrity at *all* times. These are the questions first to be settled, and in the spirit of which every citizen is morally bound to act. Candidates of whom these questions can be well answered, are the only men worthy to rule. I put it then to the conscience of all the enlightened friends of our country, and especially of Christians, if you can in good faith contentedly go about your private concerns, and withhold your countenance, influence, and votes from the election of such men to office ? Is it not as truly your duty to be at the polls in the appointed time and place, as to be in the sanctuary upon the Sabbath, or at the domestic altar morning and evening ? Have you a right to presume that God will answer your prayers for Christian rulers, if you use not the constituted means to obtain them ?

It is our duty *to practice and encourage obedience to the civil authorities.* The Jews entertained scruples respecting the lawfulness of obeying heathen magistrates ; 'This,' says Dr. Scott, in his notes on the 13th of Romans, 'gave occasion to turbulent spirits to excite scandalous and ruinous insurrections ; and the same spirit might creep in among Christians, to the great disgrace of the

gospel; as in later times, ecclesiastics, especially in the church of Rome, have claimed the most exorbitant exemptions in this particular. The apostle therefore used the most decisive language on this subject; — every soul, or person, whether a Jewish or Gentile convert, a private Christian or a minister, was absolutely required to be subject to the laws and edicts of those, who held authority in the state; that is, in all things lawful. The 'higher powers' at Rome were not only heathen, but usurping, oppressive, and even persecuting governors; and Nero, who was then emperor, was a monster of cruelty, caprice, and wickedness, almost unparalleled in the annals of mankind: yet no exception was made on that account. Christians were required to look above such concerns, and to consider God as the source of all authority, and civil government as his appointment for the benefit of mankind; — the several forms of government, prevailing in different places, were to be regarded as the effect of his superintending providence, and the persons raised to authority as his deputies. It was therefore incumbent on all Christians to render a prompt and quiet obedience to those governors, under whom their lot was cast, patiently submitting to the hardships, and thankfully receiving the benefits thence resulting, without objecting to the vices of the constitution, the administration, or the rulers, as an excuse for

refusing subjection.' — It is evident that the apostle did not mean to determine the divine right of absolute monarchy, or exclusively of any form of government; but to inculcate subjection to the ruling powers of every place and time in which believers lived.'— 'Whatever be the form of the existing government, or the way by which it was established; while it continues to exist, it must be regarded and submitted to as the appointment of Providence.' I have given you the sentiments of Dr. Scott thus full, in his own language, as a summary of what I find to be the sentiments of the most learned, pious, and judicious divines generally respecting the doctrine of the Bible on this highly important subject — the duty of subjection to the civil authorities. And indeed who, that faithfully studies the Bible, whether the Old Testament, or the instruction and example of Christ and of his apostles, can question that such is the will of God; the same as enjoined by St. Paul to Titus, 'Put them in mind *to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates*, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness to all men.'

But here two questions start. — The first is, Are we bound to obey magistrates, if they are wrongfully invested with civil power? On this point Mr. John Locke remarks in his 'Treatise on

Government,' quoted also by Dr. Scott, 'Whether we take *powers* here in the abstract for political authority, or in the concrete for the persons actually exercising political power and jurisdiction, the sense will be the fame. How men come by a rightful title to this power, or who has this title, the apostle is wholly silent, and says nothing of it. To have meddled with that, would have been to decide of civil rights, contrary to the design and business of the gospel, and the example of our Savior, who refused meddling in such cases, with this decisive question, 'Who made me a judge or a divider over you?' On the same point Dr. Scott also remarks, 'The words rendered 'the powers that be,' or 'the existing authorities,' seem expressly intended to exclude all such inquiries.' — 'Perhaps nothing involves greater difficulties in very many instances, than to ascertain to whom, either individually or collectively, the authority justly belongs; or in fact, what constitutes a lawful title to authority. If then the most learned and intelligent men find insuperable difficulties, and differ widely in their opinions respecting this subject, how shall the bulk of the people be able to decide it? And if Christians are first to determine concerning the *right* by which their rulers possess and exercise authority, before they think themselves bound to obedience, they must very commonly indeed be engaged in opposition to the existing authorities. But the

apostle's design was to mark out the plain path of duty to Christians, however circumstanced.' Such, on examination, you will find to be the opinion of the more intelligent Christians and divines generally, who have written upon this subject. Who that considers it well, will question its soundness?

The next inquiry is, Are we bound to obey rulers, if they set themselves up against God, require us to renounce allegiance to him, and issue edicts designedly contravening the express commands of the Bible? Certainly not. In that case they *forfeit* their divine right as civil rulers to govern us; they are then no longer 'the ministers of God to us for good.' Such was the case when Daniel refused to renounce the service of God at the king's edict, and when the apostles refused to disobey the express command of God to preach the gospel. But perhaps no point has been more mistaken and abused, to the great detriment of religion, than this. Christianity does not allow resistance of the civil power, lawfully exercised, in *any* instance. Moreover to all uninspired subjects of civil government, it is important to consider, that the sum of the divine law is *love*; that is, a supreme regard to the glory of God, in the welfare of his creatures; that particular rules are not laid down extensively in the Bible, both because they would make that book too large, and also impair our moral agency, by reducing our discipline too

much to infancy; that the best way to promote the welfare of mankind, in respect to unspecified particulars, varies with circumstances, always calling for our discretionary and prudential powers; that along with human frailty is also human depravity, in the form of self-will and self-confidence, to be guarded against, making it the Christian duty of every man to set up his religious opinions in opposition to civil authorities with much circumspection and delay, lest he fall into the vortex of fanaticism and the condemnation of the devil; that civil government is of divine appointment, *itself* religiously binding upon us and *essential* to the very existence of all society and all religion; and that consequently every man is bound to *yield* his private opinions, so far forth as to render implicit obedience to the civil power, in all things not expressly and incontestably forbidden in the Bible. Allow every man to set up his own religious notions, whatever they be, in opposition to the civil power, and we are exposed to as many laws and kings as there are dreams in the human brain. Multitudes are at once set loose from all civil law. It seems to me that every man who looks at this subject, in the light of Scripture and of common sense, must see, that in order to have any such thing as government, there must be some yielding of private opinions, as long as private opinions are so va-

rious; and that consequently religious principle will sometimes authorize a man, for the sake of his relation to civil government, to do what, *but* for that relation, he might think it wrong to do. For instance, the man who thinks all war unjustifiable, might think it wrong, apart from his relation to civil government, to do military service, or pay a tax; but, in consideration of that relation, he may Christianly judge it his duty to do it. So of many other things. Now if you start back from this, with the popular cry that *right* is eternally *right*, and *wrong* eternally *wrong*, independent of law and government, I reply, that elementarily and abstractly considered, so they are; but as applied in particular practice, that is *right*, which goes to promote the greatest good of mankind, that is *wrong*, which goes against it. God's commanding thus and so does not *make* a thing right or wrong, he commands thus and so because it *is* right or wrong; and it *is* right or wrong, not from any intrinsic character in the metaphysical idea — for such an idea is a mere nihility — but because it does or does not tend to promote the greatest good. And so *vital* is civil government to that good, that in all cases when acting in its own appropriate sphere, and not setting itself religiously up in the place of God expressly to break our allegiance to him, God has made it right and a duty for us

to sustain and obey it. And most obviously, if to the Christian subjects of even *heathen* governments, unqualified subjection to the civil laws was enjoined in the strongest terms, as in our text, needs there any inference respecting the duty of the subjects of professedly *Christian* governments ?

I have dwelt the longer on this, because there is an increasing class of men among us of loose mind and character, who think it a very venial and pretty thing to trample the civil laws under their feet, regardless of the ruin that must come of it ; and because this class of men, instead of being *rebuked*, as they should be, are even *encouraged*, by a mistaken zeal in some Christians, who *also* think with them, though for other reasons, that it is a small matter to contemn the civil power, and even make a *religious conscience* of doing it! Well may we seriously fear, that what with a large class of irreligious men of *no* conscience on the one hand, and a class of religious men of *misguided* conscience on the other, conspiring against the civil power, unless speedy and efficient means prevent, the dreadful work will ere long be done ; the civil power will fall, and in its fall crush the nation! God forbid that *Christians* put another finger to this awful work ! Let the hands of the Church be wiped of this foul stain. If our government is doomed to perish, let

it fall by other hands than theirs, 'who were chosen in Christ, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love.'

Reformers themselves must reform. Behold some of the advocates of immediate abolition, on the one hand, urging forward their reform in a manner defying constitutional rights, and reckless of consequences, and some of their opposers, on the other hand, chuckling at their hard rubs, their rebuke of rods, the tar and feathers, and even the halters, which, in their straight-forward zeal, they sometimes encounter from men acting equally in opposition to the civil power. Behold some of the emissaries of the pope, on the one hand, muzzling our press, and in various ways encroaching step by step upon the spirit of our free institutions, aiming to plant the iron foot of his ecclesiastical majesty upon us, and some of his enemies, on the other hand, stirring up violence and hurling the torch upon his dwelling, in equal resistance and peril of the civil power, — and a similar course in various other dividing, agitating and strife-stirring matters. Men at either extreme, alike zealous for good or for evil, taking law and judgment and execution from the hands ordained by God, into their own hands! Contempt of constitutional rights, of civil authorities, of national and social compacts, and even of private interests, has within a few years risen to an astonishing

pitch of boldness among us; — yes, in some public teachers and journals, even under the white flag of Christianity; — all which is being responded to, by an equal menace of stripes, and brick-bats, and Lynch law, and unceremonious gibbets, from the opposite quarter. To what are we coming! We can scarcely take up a newspaper, without some fresh admonition that the contempt of civil authority, which hangs on so many burning lips, and darkens so many public journals, and the consequent reign of mobocracies and riots, is increasing in the land with alarming speed.* How far

* Dr. Paley remarks, 'A protestant establishment in this country may have little to fear from its popish subjects, scattered as they are throughout the kingdom, and intermixed with the protestant inhabitants, who yet might think them a formidable body, if they were gathered together into one county. The most frequent and desperate riots are those which break out amongst men of the same profession, as weavers, miners, sailors. This circumstance makes a mutiny of soldiers more to be dreaded than any other insurrection. Hence also one danger of an *overgrown metropolis*, and of those *great cities* and *crowded districts*, into which the inhabitants of trading countries are commonly collected. The worst effect of popular tumult consists in this, that they discover to the insurgents the secret of their own strength, teach them to depend upon it against a future occasion, and both produce and diffuse sentiments of confidence in one another, and assurances of mutual support. Leagues thus formed and strengthened, may overawe or overset the power of any state; and the danger is greater, in proportion as from the propinquity of habitation and intercourse of employment, the passions and counsels of a party can be circulated with ease and rapidity. It is by these means, and in such situations, that the minds of men are so affected and prepared, that the most dreadful uproars often arise from the slightest provocations, When the train is laid, a spark will produce the explosion.'

distant suppose ye our ruin is, if things continue to go on thus? Is not this the very way in which the modified governments of the Old World went down to perdition? Are you not aware, that the subjects of republican governments never incline to set upwards towards higher deference and submission to the powers that be? They always incline the other way. The reason is manifest; there are more who wish to *rule*, than who wish to *obey*. Such is our nature. It comes in great measure of the jealousy of ambitious competitors, preferring even revolution to subordination; and more especially, in elective governments, from the greater envy of the elevation of natural equals, than of the continued elevation of hereditary power.

The various kinds of government have their peculiar evils, against which it is our special duty to guard. Were I living under an oppressive monarchy or aristocracy, I should probably preach in a somewhat different tone, and aim my influence in another direction. 'The evils of a republic,' says Dr. Paley, 'are dissension, tumults, faction; the attempts of powerful citizens to possess themselves of the empire; the confusion, rage and clamor, which are the inevitable consequences of assembling multitudes, and of propounding questions of state to the discussion of the people,' &c. and to this may be added, an ever-grow-

ing impatience of all subordination, all authority, all government. Read the history of the ancient Grecian and Roman states, of the more modern states of Germany, Switzerland, and France, and you will not fail to see that the way in which they went to ruin, is the very way in which we are going. Continue to contemn the civil power, deny the divine origin and sanction of civil government, assert the pre-eminence of individual rights, and at length the depraved and warring elements of human nature become too boisterous and violent to be controlled.

Let all our citizens then be well instructed in respect to the duty and importance of obeying the laws. Especially let all Christians consider it a *part of their religion*, as truly as prayer. The same divine authority which says, 'Pray always,' says also, 'Submit yourself to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well.' And even if there be errors in law and judgment, they are to be corrected, as a general rule, not by violence, but by the gradual operation of a spiritual and moral influence upon the minds of men. In respect to the duties of repentance and faith, Christ and his apostles were *immediatists* of the highest stamp; but in respect to the bearing of the gospel on

civil institutions, they were *gradualists.* They always obeyed the laws, and paid deference to rulers.

If we would have better laws, we must better obey those we now have. If we would have wiser and more righteous rulers, we must conduct more wisely and righteously towards those now in authority. This is God's way of reforming the world. Let it not be forgotten, that to attempt to accomplish even a good end in a wrong way, is to do wrong; and that the right way to benefit our country, is always the way of subjection to its laws. Let this sentiment prevail through the land, and be engraven on every heart; then may we hope that our government will become more and more Christian and permanent; that subjects and rulers and laws will grow better together; that wisdom and knowledge will become the stability of our times, and the fear of the Lord our treasure.'

SERMON IV.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

It is our duty to *show respect to rulers*, and also to conduct towards all men according to their rank and calling. We ought to raise up a public sentiment, that will palsy the licentious tongue, and also condemn to the shelf such writings as deal in tones of wanton slander of men in authority, aiming to bring them into contempt. 'Put them in mind to *speak evil* of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness to all men.' The same religion which says, 'Fear God,' says also, '*Honor the king*.' 'Thou *shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the rulers of thy people*.' '*Curse not the king*, no not in thy thought.' 'Render to all their dues, *honor to whom honor is due*.' 'The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished; but chiefly them that *despise government, and are not afraid to speak evil of dignities*.' The very strongest language of rebuke do the Scriptures bestow upon such. 'These *filthy dreamers*, despise dominion and speak evil of dignities.'

But the ruler is a bad man, as you think. What then? He is not worse than the devil, and you are not higher than the archangel; 'yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.'

But you have an excellent motive; the ruler is a bad man, in your estimation, and you wish to bring him into contempt among the people, to prevent his re-election. Granting that, you mistake the right way to prevent it. You only exasperate his adherents to greater desperation in his behalf, and also incur the hazard of producing the reaction of an awakened sympathy from his opposers. You take the surest way to promote him; and that too under the most inauspicious circumstances. Besides, you go directly athwart the instructions and examples of the Bible. Mark the respectful conduct of Nathan towards David, of Daniel towards Darius, of Jesus Christ towards civil magistrates, of Paul towards Agrippa. 'It is written,' said Paul, even when suffering unlawfully from the hands of his ruler, '*Thou shalt not speak evil of the rulers of thy people.*' How are these divine admonitions forgotten among us! It would seem that some even think they are *doing God service*, when reviling the rulers.

The wrong doings of rulers are not to be countenanced, or concealed; they ought to be suitably

exposed, and it is one of the many benefits of our newspapers, that they help to guard our public offices from abuse, by holding the faults of their incumbents before the public eye; and I am happy to bear my testimony concerning many, that they do it in a becoming manner. But this is far from true of all. There is a respect due to men in office, *for their office' sake*, even in exposing their faults. They ought to be exposed in a way to avoid, as far as possible, degrading the dignity of their stations.

Jealousy and contempt of envied conditions of every kind, are also expressly condemned in the Bible. The everlasting echo of liberty and equality, fomenting a spirit of envious alienation towards men of office, rank, or profession, aided by the speculations of the atheistic philosophers, contributed to pave the way to the French Revolution. In animadverting upon it, in a letter to a gentleman in Paris, Mr. Burke remarks — 'We are not the converts of Rousseau; we are not the disciples of Voltaire; Helvetius has made no progress among us. Atheists are not our preachers; madmen are not our lawgivers. We know that *we* have made no discoveries; and we think that no discoveries are to be made, in morality; nor many, in the great principles of government, nor in the ideas of liberty, which were understood long before we were born, altogether as well as they will

be after the grave has heaped its mould upon our presumption, and the silent tomb shall have imposed its laws on our pert loquacity. In England we have not yet been completely emboweled of our natural entrails; we still feel within us, and we cherish and cultivate those inbred sentiments which are the faithful guardians, the active monitors of our duty, the true supporters of all liberal and manly morals. We have not been drawn and trussed, in order that we may be filled, like stuffed birds in a museum, with chaff and rags and paltry blurred shreds of paper about *the rights of man.* We preserve the whole of our feelings still native and entire, *unsophisticated by pedantry and infidelity.* We have real hearts of flesh and blood, beating in our bosom. We *fear* God; *we look up with awe to kings; with affection to parliaments; with duty to magistrates; with reverence to priests;* and with *respect to nobility.* Why? because it is *nature* to do thus; because all other feelings are false and spurious, and tend to corrupt our minds, to vitiate our primary morals; to render us unfit for rational liberty; and, by teaching us a servile, licentious, and abandoned insolence, to be our low sport for a few holidays, to make us perfectly fit for, and justly deserving of slavery, through the whole course of our lives.'

How much the reverse of this are *we* becoming. How unlike 'looking up with awe to kings,' to

see the person of even the chief magistrate of the nation caricatured and exposed at every corner, looking more like a monkey than a human being! How unlike 'looking up with affection to parliament,' to see members of our national congress, set publicly forth in the contemptible light of a kitchen cabinet, caricatured to the eyes of the laughing world in the most ridiculous manner! How long, at this rate, will our children respect our national councils, as *we* were taught to respect them. How are we receding from that spirit which delights to do 'homage to magistrates, reverence to priests, respect to rank and profession.' Let us go on thus, inculcating this contempt of office, rank, men and manners, upon the minds of the rising generation, and that *inbred sentiment of respect*, which is the support of all virtue, religion, and government, will be utterly broken down, and our civil and social institutions will fall with it. Our fathers had that sentiment; they got it from the Bible; they learned it also from the institutions of the Old World, in which are *some* things Christian and good after all. They cherished it; they inculcated it upon the minds of their children — with what diligence, we still remember! Let us beware how we depart from it.

Do I then encourage an *aristocracy*? By no means; if by aristocracy you mean also a *monopoly*. I would have the way to distinction equally

open to all. I love the free and equal institutions of my country; none other in the world so well. It is for this reason I wish to preserve them. Nothing is more grateful, than to see a man rising by virtue and industry from small beginning to eminence; while at the same time nothing is more painful, than to see him rise there but to be envied, maligned, abused. I would have every man free to choose his calling; not only so, but encouraged by all lawful means to do his best in it. But having chosen his calling, let every man be satisfied with it, contented with the relation into which it brings him to society, and count it his true honor to fill his station well, whatever it be.

Equally does the Bible rebuke the spirit of *haughty insolence and contempt towards men of inferior rank.* 'Mind not high things, but *condescend to men of low estate.*' Mark the example of Christ. Both individual and social happiness are promoted by variety of rank and calling, and the due regard of the members of all to each other. The social and political body, as truly as the ecclesiastical, is a perfect whole, all of whose parts are essential. 'For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body

were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body?' 'But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body which seem to be more feeble, are necessary.' — 'There should be no schism in the body; but the members should have the same care one for another. And thus if one member suffers all the members suffer with it, or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.' Never was there drawn a more perfect picture of the relative duties and necessities of society. Neither essential honor or happiness depend upon office or rank, but only upon *doing well* the duties of the calling in which we are; conducting towards all, as we would have them do to us, and tendering to all the respect due.

Away then with the false ambition of external equality and sameness. Away too with the spirit of detraction, engendered by lust of something not our own. Let us delight to pay 'honor to whom honor is due.' Let us even be *affectionately jealous* for the respect of those in authority over

us. Let us inculcate the same upon our children. Never in their hearing, let us allow ourselves to 'speak evil of dignities.' We ought to be very patient towards what we suppose to be *errors* in rulers, practicing towards them that 'charity which hopeth all things and endureth all things,' always considering that *they* may see sufficient reasons for the course they pursue which *we* cannot. Their eye is in a different position from ours. Acting in a public capacity, they may be expected to see things in their comprehensive relations, as we do not. Especially should we be slow to impeach their *motives*. We ought to identify our interest with theirs, as they ought also theirs with ours; to be proud of their reputation; to sympathize with their responsibilities; and never to add to their burden, in the present state of our country, far from enviable.

This is the way to have good rulers. Never was it known that the people who treated their rulers thus, were cursed with bad ones. It was only when the Israelites became abusive towards their rulers, that 'God sent them a *king in his wrath*'—a bad king to curse them. 'To the froward, he will show himself froward.' Complain we of our rulers? We have better than we deserve. Let us reform ourselves. It is impious to expect elections that will furnish us better rulers, till we conduct better towards those we now

have. Unless we reform, it will come to pass that no *respectable* man will *accept* of our offices. Not only so, but if we countenance this vulgar contempt of rulers, a large portion of our voters will in their wisdom judge that *contemptible* men are the *right* men for rulers — the very men they *ought* to elect. Let our *conduct* say that rulers are *men to be respected ;* then will the sentiment prevail, that none ought to be elected but men *worthy* of respect.

We should endeavor by all possible means *to perpetuate and strengthen our national union*, and countenance nothing tending to its dissolution. A great nation, spread over so vast a territory, comprising very diverse interests and characters, demands no trifling attention to this duty. As our danger of alienation is great, so is our duty to guard against it proportionably great. In every view, a dissolution of our union were infinitely to be deplored. Even if one fair line of separation could be drawn between the north and the south, leaving each half entire, what were the result ? — The moral and religious influence of the north upon the south, and of the south upon the north, greatly abated or destroyed ; also all the connecting social and civil power annihilated ; a wall of separation high as heaven as to mutual good, but unfortunately no physical barrier to animosities and wars ; the chains of everlasting bondage riveted on the

slaves, or the slaves rioting on the blood of their masters; a social and political body sundered in the midst, exposing either half to prolonged suffering or instant death, — all to the incalculable detriment of the religious interests of our country and of the world. Nor is this all. A peaceful division of this nation into two entire and sound parts, the states of each resolving themselves into a federal compact, is not to be expected on any principles of human prophecy. Once sunder the bond that now holds us in one, and it is to be apprehended that there is enough of ungovernable energy in these elements to break us into a hundred fragments. Kings and demagogues would multiply in the land, like the frogs and locusts of Egypt. Like ancient Greece, we might become severed into numerous petty states, headed by ambitious despots and aristocrats, to worry and waste each other till overwhelmed by a common ruin. True is the maxim on which our fathers acted, 'United we stand; divided we fall.'

We ought then to cherish our union as the apple of our eye, and to guard against *every form* of encroachment upon the spirit of our constitution. Let every state have its entire rights, so far as it is sovereign; while its subjection to the federal compact is imperiously demanded, so far as it is constitutionally subject. Let nothing be done or countenanced, either by state legislation or by

private associations, entrenching upon the federal union or upon the rights of states.

Some suppose that what they call *moral* means, of whatever kind or degree, are of course lawful. There is no greater mistake. For what mean they by moral means? Associations, books, pamphlets, papers, preaching, and other public appeals to the passions; — of all means, in popular governments, most dangerous, most wicked, most to be dreaded, when misdirected. 'But there is *sin* in my neighbor, and I must remove it.' And are you sure, that you are the person to do it? Admitting you are, beware then that in your attempts to remove *his* sin, you do not commit a greater yourself. 'But he is enduring a very sore evil, and benevolence summons me to interpose.' Consider that even benevolence is not always *benevolent.* Your neighbor has a wen in his side. It is a sore evil, to be sure, and benevolence would fain relieve it; but is every quack therefore justified in thrusting his coarse knife rudely into the patient's side, at the hazard of his life? He may make the sore worse; he may occasion unnecessary irritation and inflammation; he may even open a large artery and produce instant death. Many things he may do much less benevolent, than not to obtrude his services. Or perhaps your neighbor has a mote in his eye. Truly it were benevolent, skilfully to remove it; but before you attempt the delicate

task, take first the beam from your *own* eye ; then will you *see clearly* to take the mote from your neighbor's eye. 'But surely I ought to set myself at once to the correction of all sin.' Doubtless ; but not in a *sinful way* — not in a way that disregards *consequences* and produces more sin than you prevent. 'But if I only do *right*, I am not *responsible* for consequences.' Ah ! — If you only '*do right.*' That is begging the point. As though consequences did not enter into the very question of right. 'But I have a glorious text to stand upon.' 'Justitia fiat ; ruat cœlum' 'Let right be done ; though heaven fall.' A truly good text it is. Nothing is better, in its true import ; but as applied by some, it has more of the savage than of the Christian. Yes, so say I, let *right* be done, come what may. But what *is* right. In all cases when we have not express direction from God respecting the particular way of fulfilling the general law of love, the probable *consequences* are the grand means of determining what is right. A rational and prospective being not responsible for the *consequences* of his conduct ! An outrage upon the Bible ! The entire moral weight of that Book presses upon the principle that, so far as he is informed or can foresee, every moral being *is* responsible for the consequences of his conduct. In urging his law upon us, God points us to the consequences of obedience and of disobedience,

and tells us that for these he will hold us forever responsible. If the transgressor goes on in sin, and the consequence is endless mischief, *he* is responsible for it, and retributive justice will fix it eternally on his own head. So also in summoning us to a wise and faithful attention to the interests of the present life, God everywhere points us to consequences, calling us to act in view of them; presenting them as *objective motives*, and holding us responsible for them. If we, therefore, in defiance of probable consequences, countenance measures tending to the dissolution of our national union, and the consequences overtake us and our children in the ruin of State and Church, ours is the sin, and on us will avenging justice fall.

There is a right and a wrong, in attempting to do good, as well as in everything else. Said one of the most pious and eminent of our citizens to certain individuals, who were pushing the scheme of abolition in what he conceived to be an unwise and unchristian way, 'If your design is to alienate our southern brethren from us; to place them beyond the reach of our influence; to steel their hearts against any convictions we may wish to induce; to blight, blast, and condemn them: to rivet faster the chains of slavery, and to sunder our union, — you are taking exactly the right course. But if you wish to secure their confidence; to win their hearts; to produce salutary

conviction of the wrongfulness of slavery; to induce them to effect as speedy an emancipation as in wise benevolence they can, and to perpetuate our fellowship and union, — you are taking exactly the wrong course — you are going against all the known laws of human nature, your course is the most impolitic conceivable. Never did such means as you use, conduct to such results as you seek.'

Far, very far, am I from advocating slavery. Of the everlasting wrongfulness of the system, I have never for a moment doubted. Nor wish I to apologize for its advocates. Moreover, the conduct of some at the south in rebuking the movements of abolitionists, in unlawful ways, is worthy of unmitigated reprehension. Were I at the south, I would preach against such conduct as pointedly as I would against the conduct of their antipodes at the north. But we owe it to our brethren at the south, and our southern brethren owe it to us, to consider, that those in either section who advocate these rash and unconstitutional measures, are not *all* or *half* the community. They are a great *minority.* Then let not the good feelings, faith, and fellowship of the majority be disturbed. Let not our southern friends suppose, that all the hard names so bountifully lavished upon them here, are the voice of '*The North;*' nor let *us* suppose, that the tones of angry menace, that come wafting to us ever and anon on the

southern breezes, are the echo of '*The South.*' Still, that there is considerable agitation and anger towards us, among the people of the south, we have too much reason to apprehend. To this, however, they have been provoked by us. I will not say that the effect is not greater than the cause justifies. But never were the bonds of slavery so tight, laws respecting it so rigorous, slave-holders so impregnable to our influence, and the prospect of a national rupture so alarming, as at this moment. It has come of indiscreet movements on the subject of slavery at the north, urged forward in a way, as I conceive, adverse to the spirit of the gospel, and also to the spirit of our national constitution. Unless we adopt a more Christian way, and 'do the things that make for peace,' the breach will increase, till we must bid farewell to our union.

Respecting what that more Christian way is, I have expressed my views to you on a former occasion, in discoursing on the way to promote liberty and union. The importance, and hence the duty of fostering our union is so obvious, that it were superfluous to produce at large the scriptural testimony respecting it. All those injunctions upon the Jewish nation to guard against civil dissensions, and to prevent men who would excite them; all those Scriptures which teach us to lead quiet and peaceable lives, to dwell together as brethren, to have no strife, to preserve the unity

of the spirit; to promote peace, love, union, both in religious and civil matters — are fully to this point. I have instanced the fretting subject of slavery; but that is far from being the *only* one, on which we are in danger of dashing. The same manner in which we ought to meet this, is equally due to all other subjects endangering our union.

We ought to *pray much for our rulers* If we would cease 'to speak evil of dignities,' desist from reviling our rulers, and set our hearts benevolently to praying for them, our conduct would be more according to the Bible, and would promise to make our rulers better, if better they need to be. Do you doubt it? Listen then to what inspiration says, — 'I exhort,' says Paul, 'that first of all supplications and prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for *all* men; for *kings*, and for all that *are in authority*, that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.' Even the haughty and persecuting heathen rulers, God would not suffer Christians to revile and abandon to perdition; rather would he have them *pray* for them, as objects of their love and hope; seeing he would have all men converted and saved. This too was the way to promote

mutual good will, to conciliate suspicions and jealousies, to produce in both rulers and subjects, a disposition to 'lead quiet and peaceable lives.' 'I will, therefore, that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.'—That is, instead of cherishing ill will towards the rulers, pray for them in the spirit of love; instead of despairing of their conversion, pray with confidence in the divine promise. The amount of the instruction is, 'Put away all reviling, all evil speaking of your rulers, and set yourselves with the Christian spirit to praying for them.' And what does our observation teach us? Does ever a man pray aright for those he slanders? And does ever a man slander those, for whom he aright prays? Let those 'supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks,' which the Bible enjoins, go up to God through the length and breadth of our land, 'for all that are in authority,' and how soon should we love and respect our rulers, and they love and respect us, and the blessing of Heaven descend on all.

We ought also to pray incessantly and fervently for our *nation*. All but infidels believe that prayer has efficacy with God, and we are assured that prayer for their people and nation is often enjoined on men in the Bible. Witness too, the examples of Abraham, of Lot, of Moses, of David, of Daniel, of Nehemiah, of Jeremiah, and of other good men. Seasons of

special fasting and prayer for their country in peril or affliction, were also commanded and practiced. 'Turn ye to me,' saith the Lord, 'with all your heart, and with fasting and with weeping, and with mourning, and rend your heart and not your garment, and turn to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repenteth of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent and leave a blessing behind him.' 'Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly; — let the priests, the ministers of the Lord weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thy heritage to reproach, that the heathen should reign over them.' Why should they say among the people, 'Where is their God?' 'Then will the Lord be jealous for his land and pity his people.' And surely, brethren, if ever a nation was in a condition calling for similar fasting and prayer, ours is at the present time. Especially let us all realize the importance of making it *a part of our daily religion*, to pray more for our rulers, our institutions, our nation.

I have endeavored to present a religious view of our duties to our nation, comprising them in the following particulars, — of all rulers, to rule in the fear of God, having supreme regard to his

glory in the highest good of the people ; of all citizens, to elect competent and righteous men to office ; to practice and encourage subjection to the civil authorities ; to promote a sentiment of respect towards men in authority ; to foster our national union ; to pray for our rulers and our nation.

Time fails me to speak at large of our MOTIVES to these duties ; I shall only glance at them, leaving them to expand and take effect in your own minds.

And first, *we are on the verge of national ruin.* Let things go on with increasing ratio for a very few years longer, as they have for five years past, and we shall be gone beyond redemption. Can any intelligent student of history doubt it ? Nothing will save us, short of something resulting in a better understanding, and more faithful practice of our duties to civil government — a new and better spirit, encouraged by all good men, reacting upon that at present so rife, and producing a right tone of sentiment and action towards what the Scriptures denominate 'the powers that be.'

But what if our nation *does* perish, say some ; Is that a calamity of so great magnitude ? I observe then again, that in all human probability, the temporal and eternal destinies of many millions in this country, including our own children, hang upon the fate of our nation. If their ruin is the probable consequence of our misdoing, then

will their blood be upon us. We shall participate in the guilty cause of it, and God will 'visit the iniquities of the fathers upon their children,' it may be, even 'to the third and fourth generations,' before the fathers' curse is removed, and a nation's blessing shall again spread its wing over a redeemed land.

But further, the fate of other nations, now civilly and morally enslaved, will probably turn on the fate of ours. Despotic governments are waiting the result of our experiment, are sure to feel the power of our example and yield to it, if we fail not. There is in man a principle which makes it certain, that if nations *can* be permanently free and safe, they *will* be. The experiment is now being made by us on a scale more grand, decisive, and sure to effect the whole world, than ever was before. If we fail, the hope of despots will revive, of the people die; and a night darker than Egypt will come over the nations. Yea, the fate of Africa herself, with her millions of sons and daughters of sable skin, and sabler mind, held in slavery under her own sky, awaits the influence to emanate from us, to emancipate her children, or prolong their bondage. Let our nation live and prosper, and not long hence will her light penetrate the darkest lands; yea, even Etheopia herself will stretch forth her hands to God. Already has our example awakened the

spirit of liberty in the subjects of arbitrary and hereditary crowns; but their monarchs say 'Wait the experiment. America is yet a child. Time will prove what we declare, that republican governments can never stand.' And oh, if we do not disappoint them, if we *do* fail, how will they '*scream out their joy!*'

The time of the Redeemer's enthronement and triumph over the world, will, in all probability, be greatly accelerated or retarded by the success or the failure of our nation. We limit not the Holy One, but we are assured that he works by means. Nor is it in the midst of revolution, anarchy, and blood, that his spiritual kingdom comes. It is when peace and quiet are pervading the earth, as at his advent. Moreover, the same disaster that should crush our nation, would along with it dash the whole system of moral machinery in our land for disseminating over the earth the Christian salvation. Can we, as Christians, be indifferent to interests so vast and sacred!

Finally, *the authority of God* as presented in the Bible, presses its mighty motives upon us. If I have not studied that sacred Book in vain, if I have not utterly mistaken its meaning, it does positively and most explicitly enjoin upon us, as an essential part of religion, those duties to civil government which I have to-day set forth. I appeal then to my fellow citizens, not only as men, as

philanthropists, and as lovers of their country, pledged to her interests, but, to all susceptible to the higher and more sacred motives of religion, as *men fearing God.* If you would be true to God, be true to your nation. If you would advance his glory, promote the interests of that government under which his providence has placed you. By all the respect which he has for the Bible, is every man in the land summoned to a faithful discharge of these duties to his nation. Only let us be a people religiously faithful to the duties enjoined in the Bible, walking in the steps of Moses and of David, of Christ and of his apostles, and while suns roll and rivers run shall our nation stand, towering in greatness, and strength, and glory. The mount of the Lord's house will be established on the top of these mountains, and will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will flow unto it.

SERMON V.

DUTY TO CHRISTIANIZE CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

Rev. 11 : 15. The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.

The prophet John was favored with a vision of the triumphant reign of Christ over the kingdoms of this world. It is our duty, by all Christian means, to hasten on that reign. It is to be done, first and principally, by elevating the holiness and thus increasing the moral power of the Christian church, in connection with the divinely constituted instrumentalities for evangelizing and regenerating mankind. But I am now to speak more especially of another and a subordinate duty; nevertheless a real one.

WE OUGHT TO DIRECT THE INFLUENCES OF THE GOSPEL TO THE OBJECT OF THOROUGHLY CHRISTIANIZING OUR CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

Christians have often failed to give sufficient attention to this duty; — some from wrong theoretical views respecting the extent of the relations of

Christianity to the temporal interests of society; others, from a fear of entering upon the stormy element of political strife; others, from supposing it beneath the dignity of the Christian spirit to meddle with political affairs; others, from an excess of that delicacy of feeling which shrinks from contact with the rough world; others, from a prejudice against everything like an alliance of Church and State. But unless I mistake the genius of Christianity, and what it is destined to accomplish, it has bearings on *all* the institutions of the world, yet to be fully developed; and it should be our Christian ambition, in the application of its power, to bequeath to coming generations a richer legacy than we received, not only in a holier and larger church, but also in an improved condition of arts, sciences, schools, laws, governments, and whatever adorns and blesses mankind.

From that *unrighteous kind* of union of Church and State, which has obtained in many of the institutions of the old world, may our nation be forever saved; but there is *another* sort of union, whose consummation is devoutly to be wished. Are politics and Christianity to be considered immortal enemies to each other? Assuredly a reconciliation is destined to take place between them. If Christianity be destined to extend her reign over the kingdoms of the world, she is to embrace

all the civil and political institutions of mankind, and unite them to herself in everlasting bonds.

The alarm which we justly feel at the mention of a union of Church and State, or of religion and politics, results rather from what has been and is, than from what ought to be and will be. It has not been a union of genuine religion with genuine politics, but of an adulteration of the two; what then could the amalgum be, but an abhorrence of all good men? The idea of some mysterious and arbitrary sovereignty, clothed with irresponsible power, that kingdoms and popedoms are divinely authorized to do wickedly, or rather that whatever they do is *of course* right, nor is to be questioned without sacrilege — such an idea has lain like a death-pall on the minds of the enthralled people, and along with other causes, prevented their long since leaping into the life, liberty, enterprise and virtue, for which they were created. Hence, instead of that order of things, by which minds, intelligent, free, active, under sanction of God, govern themselves by their own institutions, the few have controlled the many, by a power almost as physical as that by which inert matter is moulded and moved in space.

Men of wicked ambition, have thus made of Christianity corrupted, a tremendous engine of oppression. They have brought to their aid not only all the powers of this world, but the powers

of the world to come — not only the pains of the tortured body, but the pangs of the deathless spirit have been made to come down on the excited fears of men, to awe them into deeds of submission and profitable penance. All the native sensibilities to religion in minds made for religion and immortality, all the inbred reverence for superior beings, all the inherent forces of conscience, all the profound and solemn movements of the spirit in view of the amazing interests of the eternal world, have gone over together into the hands of ecclesiastical and political ambition, and forged a chain of despotic power so mighty, that scarcely have the giant forces of the Reformers, and all who have since conspired in the same struggle, been able to break it from the world.

Looking upon all this as the legitimate progeny of a union of Church and State, no wonder that the friends of humanity should cry out loudly and eternally against everything like such an union. Beholding then the little band of spiritual Christians happily united under their own peaceful banners, enjoying their common interest and seeking no kingdom but one 'not of this world;' beholding then again, in contrast, the company of restless politicians, the fire of a quenchless ambition burning on their brows, and intrigue and envy, and lust of power gathering in their train, no wonder that they have concluded, that on the

one hand is the kingdom of Christ, and on the other, the kingdom of the devil, and that all attempts to unite them were worse than idle.

Startling indeed it is, to see a popedom surmounting all law, human and divine, setting itself up in place of God; usurping dominion, absolute over men, not only for this world, but for the world to come; and to *us*, especially, the free-born puritanic sons of those who braved the perils of the ocean and the wilderness for Christian liberty, it is far from agreeable to see anything like an ecclesiastical establishment putting power and wealth in the hands of an ambitious and luxurious prelacy, and enticing unholy motives to assume the gown and surplice; — and scarcely less abhorrent, is the sight of professing Christians in Protestant lands, 'stretching beyond their measure,' and panting after the honors of political power. But what then? Are we to say, that Christianity shall have nothing to do with civil government? Or that pure Christianity is dangerous to sound politics and true liberty? I think not. To infer hence, that Christianity should be allowed *no* influence over civil government, and continually to reiterate in proof the stale lesson of European abuses, is declamation thrown into the air. It amounts only to this, that the union of selfish ambition under color of patriotism, and of selfish ambition under color of religion — the power of the adversary doubly arm-

ed and enthroned — is dangerous to human liberty; which none will doubt.

But to come to the question.— Is Christianity to have dominion over human governments? The subject is reducible to two propositions; one of which is true.

First, human governments are to be *annihilated*, and Christ is to interpose in their stead a kingdom altogether transcendent, superseding human agencies; in which he will exercise an immediate and personal reign, as some primitive Christians supposed; — or

Secondly, human governments are to be *Christianized;* so that the light, spirit, laws and principles of Christianity will pervade, animate, perfect and bless them.

To the first proposition are the following objections. In the first place, it accords not with the declaration of our text, which is, not that the kingdoms of this world are *annihilated*, but that "they *are become* the kingdoms of our Lord." In the second place, it is opposed to the constitution and course of nature; according to which all institutions and interests pertaining to this life are sustained and moved onward by human agencies. In the third place, it militates against the avowed design of Christianity, which is not to abate the activity of men, or annihilate any of their sources of happiness, but to correct whatever is wrong in

their conduct, and thus enhance the happiness of the world by bringing all of its institutions under the ascendant influence of righteousness.

The last proposition has the following support. In the first place, the express declaration of our text, corroborated by many other Scriptures of a similar import. In the second place, it is in analogy with the constitution and course of nature. In the third place, it harmonizes with all the known conduct of Jehovah in respect to his accountable creatures, which is that of a wise parent who does not take away the responsibility and motives to action from his children, and thus reduce them to the condition of passive machines, suspended and moved on his will, but teaches them to govern and take care of themselves, and throws upon them the responsibility of so doing; not indeed in a manner irrespective of his pleasure, but by convincing them that his pleasure is identified with their interest, and teaching them to incorporate it into all their doings. Finally, it accords with what we conceive to be the true genius of Christianity and republicanism. Perfect republicanism is that state of things, in which the energies of righteous government bear equally on every individual, and each passes for precisely what he *is*. Instead of withdrawing, it imparts motives of right action; all have them, and the influence of each individual is felt on the whole and on the govern-

ment, according to his character and relations. Such is the government of God over his empire of free minds; and it presents the interesting, and at first view, apparently paradoxical spectacle of a monarch most perfectly sovereign presiding over a kingdom most perfectly republican. God himself is the Supreme Ruler; all human rulers are the responsible 'ministers of God;' all subjects his responsible freemen, and all pervaded with one and the same spirit.

That such is to be the nature of Christ's reign over the kingdoms of this world, a reign to be desired and sought by us, I would offer the following proof.

A benevolent being must endeavor to render the universe as good and happy as possible. No other objective motive can compete with this, in a truly good mind. Benevolence identifies its own happiness with that of others, and its own blessedness is found in promoting the highest good of the universe. This is the perfection of moral excellence. We *know* it is, if we know or can know what goodness is. Accordingly, if God is a good being, it is an object of his desire to render the universe as good and blessed as it can be made.

To this end, it is evident, that the *world must be governed.* This is necessary, principally, to secure right moral character; but suppose this were already secured, as it is in heaven, and all men were

holy as angels, still, if there were no head, no throne, no order, no common centre of light and attraction, but all minds were thrown entirely off from allegiance to a superior wisdom, the world would become such a scene of confusion, as to chafe and destroy all human happiness.

Who shall preside? On whom shall devolve the infinitely responsible and honorable office, of supreme guardianship of these great interests? Suppose the election were now to be made, and the question to be put round through all ranks of intelligences and receive a right response, what would that response be? 'The being most COMPETENT. Tell us who the being is that possesses most of the qualties, in their highest perfection, for that office, and he is the being we would have to sit upon the throne!' Now this, in secular language, is perfect republicanism; in religious language, perfect moral government. Every mind loyal to goodness is allowed to choose and to realize the object of his choice, respecting his eternal King, as truly as though the election depended on his solitary vote. Moral worth is on the throne, and there by the wish of all good subjects.

But *who is* that being best qualified to govern? None other than GOD, supremely great and good. For, in addition to his natural attributes — his omnipotence, over all the elements of nature and

over all circumstances and events; his wisdom, to devise the best of means and infallibly guide them to the most excellent results; his immutability, to impart stability to his administration — he possesses also a moral character of infinite benevolence. 'God is love.' Now it is *because* God is more competent to govern the universe than any other being, that he *does* govern it. Were there any other being more competent, to that being he would undoubtedly resign the throne; it would be no less his pleasure than his duty to do it. Here then we have the two things brought together, divine sovereignty and human agency, both complete. For can you form higher conception of sovereignty, than that in which a monarch is seated upon his throne with almighty power, 'doing all his pleasure in the armies of heaven and amidst the inhabitants of this lower world;' or of a freedom of election more perfect, than that in which every mind chooses or refuses his king?

Suppose now that all the people of this nation were actuated by the spirit of the gospel, and there were one among us possessing the qualities to rule well in a degree possessed by no other; such as to render it certain, that his supreme reign would advance the interests of the nation in the highest possible degree. — For the same reason that he would *wish* to rule, would all wish to *have* him rule. There would be no clashing of wills, no separate

interests; his pleasure would be theirs, and their pleasure would be his.

Such is the government of God; such is to be his reign over the world, when all shall become subject to Christ. Can sovereignty be more perfect? A dominion not merely external, but over all the *affections* and *wills* of men; so that his pleasure will only need to be known, to be freely and joyfully obeyed. Mankind will then be both perfectly FREE, and perfectly GOVERNED.

Our conclusion then is, that the kind of union of Church and State which is produced by renewing the minds of men, and sending thence up a moral influence through our civil and political institutions, uniting them all to Christ, and rendering all men affectionately allegiant to HIM, as king supreme, and to subordinate rulers as his ministers, is a union to be desired, and one destined to bless all nations. Declamation against admitting the influences and claims of Christianity upon human governments, under pretence of its hostility to liberty, is too late in the day. Those who are guilty of it, ought to blush for their ignorance. I appeal to facts. Robert Hall remarks, that 'Hume and Bolingbroke, the great champions of infidelity, leaned towards arbitrary power; while Owen, Baxter, Milton, and Howe, some of the most devout and venerable characters that ever lived, were warmly attached to liberty.' The same remark is of

general application. The most devoted friends of pure Christianity, have usually been the most decided advocates of civil liberty. 'If Christ make you free ye shall be free indeed.'

Christianity will then so far change or modify human governments, as that all minds will become unfettered and all governments essentially free; not that all will of course be reduced to the same modes and forms, or that all local and national peculiarities will be merged, but that such will become the order of things, that in every nation the man most competent to rule, *will* rule, the man most competent to fill all subordinate offices, *will* fill them, and thus the benevolent wish of every subject and ruler be herein alike gratified; — while every subject shall be also disposed to render cheerful obedience to the powers thus ordained of God and chosen by himself, as at once the pleasure of God and his own pleasure, cordially rendering to all their due, 'tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.' Thus will the moral power of the intellect and heart of God, manifested in Christ, govern the nations.

There is hence to be an indissoluble union of Church and State; Christianity and politics are to join hands, identify interests, run the same race and reach the same goal.

If the foregoing doctrine be correct, it follows

that as the light and influence of Christianity shall increasingly pervade the minds of men, instead of withdrawing from the affairs of government and giving them over into the hands of unprincipled men, Christians will consider it their duty to take possession of them and consecrate them to Christ. This duty involves some particulars, which we will now briefly notice.

As far as their circumstances allow, Christians must render themselves *intelligent* in respect to this subject. None but men professionally devoted, are to be expected to explore the intricacies of legal and political science; but within the reach of all men of common sense, is a sufficient knowledge of general principles and their particular application, to qualify them for the duties of civil government;— such as the nature and end of right government; the ground of its necessity and claims; the conventional laws of nations; the constitution of our federal republic; more especially the institutions and laws of our own section. We are not to forget that all the offices of government are yet to be filled by Christians; not only are Christians to *elect* rulers, but they are themselves to *rule.* They ought then to qualify themselves for these responsibilities.

We should be unwilling to see Christians in the race of political ambition, thrusting themselves uncalled into places of civil power, panting after

worldly honor; nor do we expect it. The spirit of Christianity is equally distant from pusillanimity and obtrusiveness. It is both benevolence and humility; that benevolence which seeks the good of society, and that humility which is prone to make men adjudge places of honor to others rather than themselves. While therefore the consistent Christian will not shrink from any duty imposed upon him by the providence of God, in the expressed wish of his fellow citizens, for the good of his country, he will still be far from the character of an office *seeker*. Indeed it is proverbially true, that those most forward to get possession of offices, are usually the least worthy — the least qualified to rule, and the least sensible of the responsibilities of a public trust. So that in the end, the surest way to *lose* fame, is to *pursue* it; as even a heathen poet has taught us. When the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of Christ, though all the high places of power and honor will be filled with Christians, we expect to see the beautiful ornament of a meek and quiet spirit so reigning in their hearts, as to fulfill the apostolic instruction; 'Nothing will be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind will each esteem others better than themselves.'

The duty incumbent on all citizens to elect good men to office, is especially incumbent on Christians. It is not merely a civil, it is a *Chris-*

tian duty. But here ought we zealously to guard against making the name of Christ, or of any sect or partyi subservient to the ends of political ambition ; — This is that unhallowed alliance of Church and State, which we all justly agree to condemn. Our question respecting a candidate for office should be, not whether he is a *professor* merely of Christianity ; or to which sect he belongs ; or to which association or party, for some avowedly Christian object — whether for instance he is, on the subject of abolition, an immediatist or a gradualist ; or whether he is a mason, or an anti-mason, or neither — but whether he has most of the Christian spirit, and of the other qualifications to rule well. While we strenuously advocate the duty of elevating the best men to office, we rue the day when Christianity, in any of its forms, shall become subservient to selfish ambition and party politics. To avoid this, as far as possible, let it be regarded as a general rule, that *the prominent and leading men of these voluntary associations, should not be elected to civil offices.*

The reasons for this rule are, first, if such men are doing good, they can accomplish more in their appropriate sphere, which is to put forth not a civil, but a purely *moral* influence upon society ; secondly, it will help to save them from being possessed or charged with motives of political ambition ; thirdly, it will tend to preserve

the balance of power. Were there time, I could present to you abundant historical proof, that it would be dangerous to our free institutions to elevate men to stations of civil trust, who are leading large voluntary associations of any kind. For the same reason that I would not, as a general rule, elect a clergyman to a civil office, who is at the head of a powerful sect, I would not, at least in the present state of things, elect a leading pro-mason or anti-mason, pro-slaver or anti-slaver, or a leader of any other great voluntary association. Do you say, this is discouraging clergymen and other reformers from leading forth benevolent enterprises? How so? Political ambition is not their motive. If true to their profession, they have another and a higher aim.

A truly Christianized government is liberal, aloof from party, impartial, and while it throws its broad shield over all benevolent associations, when through human frailty such associations see not eye to eye, it will not exalt one against another; nor will it ever tolerate encroachment upon its own peculiar province. Churches and other voluntary associations have their place, civil governments have also their place; distinct in their operations, but, if truly Christian, united in spirit and conspiring to the same ultimate end — the good of mankind. Still let them move on in their appropriate spheres. Let an instrument never be

made of the one, to bring a party spirit into the other; it is alike destructive of the true interests of both. The setting up as candidate for civil office of an anti-mason, or of an abolitionist, for instance, or of any other such like partisan, *because* he is such, and the practice of catechising candidates for office with view to a party interest of this kind *is hostile to the spirit of our civil government, and ought to be universally condemned.*

The means most of all indispensable in Christianizing our government, remains to be mentioned, the *rectifying of public opinion.* Already is our government, in the main, theoretically Christian. We trace in it something of the ancient English Institutes, something of the Roman, something of the Institutes of the Grecian Republics, and many of those of the Hebrew Commonwealth; all however headed and modified, more or less, by Christianity. Our civil polity is somewhat like Nebuchadnezzar's image, of which it is said, 'his head was of fine gold, his breast and arms of silver, his belly and thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.' Now we undoubtedly ought to make our government throughout thoroughly Christian; so that all of its instruments and movements sball be controlled by the laws, precepts, motives and sanctions of the Bible. But in order

to this, public opinion must be set right; there must be formed in the community a more Christian *conscience* respecting it. We must diffuse through the public mind more of sound Christian morality, and we must bring it to bear more upon this subject. The notion that religion and politics must have nothing to do with each other, has too often induced Christians, whenever they approached politics, to leave their religion behind. Of our legislators and judges, how few bring their religion with them to the hall and the bench. They even make a *duty* of leaving it at home, or in the sanctuary, because they are professionally to serve their *office*, and not Christ! And of all subjects, how few bring religion practically to bear upon their relations and duties to our government. They seem to have, as is said of some merchants, *two* consciences; one for religion, and one for other purposes. Now if even Christians do thus, what will others do? If we would make our nation what it should be, public opinion on this subject must be regenerated; for it is public opinion, that is to elevate our civil institutions to the throne of God, or to sink them and us into heathenism.

Nothing is more apparent, if we consider that republican governments are under God creations of the people; that all their officers, their legislators, judges, executors; that both the enaction

and execution of their laws, their character and their end, depend wholly upon the will of the people; that when the elective franchise is universal, the popular will is entirely sovereign. When all authority thus returns periodically into the hands of the people, we cannot *enact* good laws without a righteous popular sentiment; and if enacted, they cannot be *executed*. What then are laws and sanctions, what the men who frame and execute them, but instruments of the public will? An able writer, in remarking upon the omnipotence of public opinion, observes, 'This is public opinion, and right it should be so. It is essential to the very existence of that form of government which under God has so long blessed us. Still it is a fact, and a fact which may serve to show us where our strength lies, and whence, if at all, weakness and ruin will overtake us. Let public opinion with all this omnipotence of control become deeply corrupt, and still government, its laws, their framers, their executors, are all subservient to its dictations. What do laws against murder avail, under the frown of public opinion? Let the laws against duelling, in many parts of our country, answer. What are laws against bodily torture, when the practice of it is countenanced by public opinion? Barbarities, which are enough to make one's blood curdle, inflicted in many instances on the unhappy victims of slavery, furnish

the answer. What are laws against drunkenness, when the popular voice forbids their execution? The woes and the groans of the land bring the reply to our ears. Now, let public opinion advance in degeneracy, till it shall decree into its public enactments the maxims of infidelity and atheism; let the living God be voted out of existence, and death, the door of eternal retributions, be transformed into the unbroken sleep of the grave; let evil be called good and good evil, darkness be put for light and light for darkness, and what would be your legislators, your judges, your witnesses, your executive officers? The mere panders and patrons of crime. What would be your subjects? The mere perpetrators of crime. And how long before a tide of woes would overwhelm all that is fair and happy in this land? How long before an impatience under miseries, which humanity could not endure, would madden and convulse the nation, till every foundation of order, peace and happiness, would be subverted, as by the shock of an earthquake.'*

And even could we succeed, in such a state of things, to elevate good men to office, and to enact and execute righteous laws, to what would all amount in controlling the warring and mighty elements of unsanctified passions, thus let loose? It

* Dr. Taylor's Discourse before the Legislature of Conn. 1823, p. 8.

were as fruitless as the attempt of Xerxes to bind the raging billows of the Hellespont with a chain. Laws of iron even, executed with a more than Lycurgian rigor, were like the green withs upon the hands of Sampson. There is an awful energy in human passions! — When once fully awakened and let loose, like the war-horse frenzied with fear and madness, they are absolutely uncontrollable. Penalties have almost no power to restrain them. Like the spirit of a storm, they will no more brook constraint, than the impatient tempest gathered in the pregnant cloud — they will burst forth, rage on, and desolate all before them, despite of the terrors of God and man! 'Bodily sufferings,' says the same writer above cited, 'are of light estimation, compared with the restlessness or anguish of ungratified desire. The death-song of the savage, which he sings when expiring under the hands of his tormentors, shows how the spirit within can sustain the pressure from without. But the spirit, tortured by its own fires, awakes to desperation. Obstruct the path of excited avarice or excited ambition, by toil, by suffering, or even by torment, and the influence to check its career is as stubble before the spreading flame. Let then a corrupt public opinion detach from civil government its moral obligations, and leave it only the influence of penal sanctions, and let the prospect of wealth or fame open bright to their appropriate pas-

sions, and the deeds of the pirate and the hero tell us what men would do. How would terror and consternation seize every heart in a moment, did we know that there was nothing but the feeble arm of magistracy to protect us from the daggers of assassins!'

It seems to be the order of nature, that the greatest of blessings is connected with the greatest of dangers. What gift so divine as that of a free mind? What woe so dreadful as its abuse brings? What public blessing richer than civil liberty? What public curse more awful than its perversion to licentiousness? Who ever stood on a more enviable eminence than Lucifer, bright morning star in strength and glory? What fall like his!

Still the eminence to which we are exalted, is no less valuable, and the blessing of free institutions no less real, because connected with danger; for there are means at command to preserve them, and the effort demanded of us to do it, is essential to human enjoyment. Give to a mind made for action the richest treasure, and therewith a certainty of its eternal inheritance without any virtuous effort on his part, and you make that mind wretched. It is not the passive, it is the active possession — the inheritance of an object as the reward of successful effort and triumph over obstacles, inspiring a consciousness of moral power and elevation, that the nature of mind craves. More-

over, it is only in this way, that those mental qualities are engendered and matured, which are the eternal soil of happiness.

The principle applies to communities. We should regard a pledge from heaven of the perpetuity of our free institutions, without any virtuous sacrifices and efforts on our part, as the sorest calamity. Not a generation would pass, before our benevolent enterprise would be palsied, our public spirit expire, selfishness and vice triumph, and an enervating sickly atmosphere come over all the land. We need not then waste a moment in repining over our national perils; let us meet them in a Christian manner, and they will become our blessing.

If the figure be not offensive, it may be said that our nation, as has been true of all nations that have lived and died, is *diseased;* and its disease is manifested in a variety of particulars. Now, while it is our duty, like the scientific physician, to give our main attention to applying the essential remedy to the vital seat of all disease, it is also incumbent upon us to meet the particular form of disease with a Christian treatment. In some instances, the most Christian treatment is what physicians call the *expectant* course. — Let the specific disease alone, and only address the generic remedy to the seat of all. Sometimes these particular forms of disease are only the natural ruptures, through

which the central disease is struggling its way out. In other instances, much may be done in the way of a specific application. Let us very briefly notice some of the more prominent forms of our national disease, and the treatment at present indicated.

Infidelity. Let infidel principles gain the ascendant, and atheism stalk at large over the land, and all our free institutions, now in the bloom and freshness of youth, would soon wither and expire like the green forest when smitten by the poisonous breath of the sirocco. The very soil would feel the curse, and refuse to yield again till renewed. Even if anarchy and blood should not instantly follow, yet it will forever remain as impossible for the soil of infidelity to nourish free institutions, as for the burning sands of an Arabian desert to produce corn and fruit. The experience of mankind is abundant on this point; infidelity *cannot* sustain free institutions. It never did and never can impart true liberty, without that licentiousness which works its overthrow.

Treatment. Indicated by the disease. Let the light, evidences, and regenerating power of the Christian religion, be by all available means disseminated through the land.

Intemperance. A vice which, even before the alarm was felt and proclaimed, had well nigh overwhelmed our nation as with a sea of fire, and

realized to us a destruction not less miserable than befell Sodom and Gomorrah. The people who had braved the perils of the ocean, subdued the wild forest, conquered the mightiest nation on the globe, and waved their stars exultingly in the eyes of the world, were sinking into the slavery of a lust more formidable than the chains of an eastern despot. Fifty years more had accomplished the prediction of an envious European prophet, who said, 'We cannot conquer the Americans, but they will conquer themselves. They have only to go on in their present course, and their boasted national glory will soon find the drunkard's grave.' The danger still threatens. Leviathan is not killed; he is only wounded.

Treatment. Let the friends of temperance spend their strength and divide their efforts no more, in idle contention about the character of the wine which Christ made, or about the use of wine at the communion, &c. &c., which only serves to make the enemies merry, at the expense of the cause they hate. What have the few drops of wine taken at the communion, or even a glass taken on the extraordinary occasion of a wedding, if people choose to take it, or in any of the circumstances in which its use appears to many to be sanctioned in the Bible, to do with the great principles of temperance? Some ultraists will no doubt continue to say, 'Much, every way; the

whole cause hinges here,' till, by the law of reaction, they are thrown to the opposite extreme. What comes of all this, but to repel entirely many from the cause, to divert others from the main object, to alienate friends, to produce a denunciatory and slanderous spirit, and thus to defeat all and more than all the good done? Let us away with it, and come unitedly to the great work. Let abstinence from intoxicating liquors as a drink, be encouraged, as the most safe, wise, Christian treatment of intemperance. This can harm none; it will benefit thousands. In the mean time, let all the light go forth; let facts speak; let the insidious nature, the guilt and danger, the irretrievable and awful ruin of intemperance persisted in, be sounded on every ear throughout the nation, till not an intemperate person can exist, but by stopping his ears and leaping wilfully from the very grasp of humanity.

Gambling. All games of hazard, including lotteries, so prevalent in many parts of our country, are repugnant alike to Christian morality and republican government. They disturb the natural course of things, break up the divinely constituted connection between industry and prosperity, nourish some of the worst of human passions and vices, subvert the foundations of all virtuous society and good government.

Treatment. Let the vice be exposed, let pub-

lic sentiment be more enlightened and reformed respecting it; let legislation lay upon it a heavy hand.

Romanism. A formidable danger is setting in upon our nation by the rapid ingress of the friends of ecclesiastical domination, and the immense expenditures and efforts of the papal powers to gain the ascendancy. Of this much is known and said; I need not enlarge. That there is some real piety in the papal church, none will probably doubt; but that the system is a corruption of Christianity, and hostile to free institutions, no Protestant will question. Romanism and republicanism cannot flourish on the same soil; if the one triumphs, the other must fall.

Treatment. Let all Christian means be used to enlighten and convert Catholics to Protestant principles, and to spiritual piety; and in exposing their errors, let nothing be needlessly done to alienate them from us. Whether the Catholic religion is to be regenerated by a convulsive and revolutionary overthrow of the entire system, or by a gradual reform of its abuses, is yet problematical.

Profanation of the Sabbath. Annihilate the moral power of the Sabbath with its religious services throughout our land, and our free institutions would scarcely survive ten years. It is one of the sheet anchors of our nation. With apprehensions of most serious alarm, therefore, must every

good mind contemplate the invasion which is made upon the excellent example of our ancestors, in respect to remembering the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.

Remedy. Let all Christian means to restore and sanctify the day in the public opinion, be greatly increased.

Ignorance. From the destitution of schools and of a preached gospel, multitudes in various parts of our country are growing up in that ignorance, by which they are qualified to become tools of demagogues, and to vote away the property, liberty and lives of their countrymen.

Treatment. Let all who have knowledge impart it bountifully; let institutions of learning be planted throughout the land.

Licentiousness. After all that is said and published of its extent, its odious and malignant character, its ruinous consequences to every fair form of intellect, religion, and social bliss; its provocation of divine wrath upon a people, as in the case of Sodom and other examples on record, the half is not told. It has even heathenized once Christian nations.

Remedy. Let the seventh commandment have its relative place in moral and religious instructions, let the pulpit and the press speak with all possible discretion and power; — no subject demands more of both.

Wealth. It is a question with some, whether anything can be dangerous, that is not sinful. Wealth is not necessarily sinful unless idolized, or retained when benevolence demands it; but as affording means of sinful indulgence, it is certainly dangerous. How many have been destroyed by abounding wealth! And did ever wealth accumulate upon any other nation, more than upon ours?

Treatment. Open wide the flood-gates of Christian benevolence.

Masonry and Antimasonry. Not very much danger, however, is to be apprehended from this cause; as the day of its rending churches and politics is past or passing.

Treatment. Let it alone.

Slavery and Anti-slavery. Of the dangers hence resulting, it is needless to speak. So great and so manifest they are, that all see and feel them. Convulsive throes and agonies as of death, are at the present moment from this source sent to the very heart of our constitution.

Treatment. One of the greatest and most difficult subjects before the public. It is perhaps questionable whether anything has been gained, or is likely to be, by an interference of people at the north with the domestic affairs of the south. Slavery is an evil which intelligent men at the south realize, even more than we do; let entirely alone, it is not improbable that the southern States would dispose of the subject in a way honorab e

to themselves, and safe to our country. Indeed they were beginning to do so, before we began to interfere. But if we have any Christian thing to do with the matter, it must be in the way of conspiring in benevolent sacrifices with our southern brethren who wish well to the colored race, in the best means for their elevation, Christianization and ultimate emancipation. Christians at the north, as a body, have entire confidence in the moral integrity of their southern brethren on this subject. Of several pious slave-holders in different States whom we know, there is not one who does not deplore the existence of slavery, who does not earnestly desire its end; and some of them are actually doing, in personal labors and sacrifices for the elevation and freedom of the slaves, far more than any man north of the Potomac has ever done. Why then should we become alienated from each other's confidence and fellowship, in a work so pre-eminently demanding unity of spirit? For the sake of religion and of our nation, *we will not.**

* With the unblushing advocates of perpetual slavery, we have no sympathy. There is often more of apparent than real difference of opinion in Christian minds, on the subject of slavery, and sometimes more of apparent than real agreement, owing to the loose and diverse application of the term *principles*. As applied to the abstract wrongfulness of slavery, and our duty to use Christian means to abolish it, probably all enlightened Christians hold essentially the same. Their disagreement respects rather, what are the most Christian means of effecting the desired object.

Slander. This includes all scurrillous attacks upon public and private characters, so abundant among us, both orally and in some papers. It is nourishing the vilest passions in the unprincipled and ambitious, producing among the people a tone of contempt towards men in authority, and begetting a most alarming spirit of misrule in the bosom of our republic.

Treatment. Let those who are reviled, revile not again; let the counter virtue come into higher honor, and let all who still persist in the vile practice, be left unanswered to themselves, to sink unheard into deserved oblivion.

Excitements and Riots. Increasing among us with frightful pace. Thought, deliberation, and calm judgment, are displaced by a spirit of popular excitement, raging like a tempest on various subjects; — while oft-recurring riots, scarcely frowned upon, are disclosing to the lawless multitude a power of theirs superior to all civil authorities, and teaching the very children in the streets to defy the arm of magistracy.

Treatment. Sufficiently indicated by the disease. Let all the friends of government come forth to the support of law. The editors of our newspapers have a very responsible work here. Let them beware how they give the least countenance to misrule.

We might go on to enlarge the catalogue of the

specific forms of our national disease; but where shall we stop? They are all referable to ONE SOURCE, the same that has ever destroyed nations and peopled earth with woe — IRRELIGION. It is the alienation of the heart from God; in its darkness and folly contemning HIS authority, rejecting HIS law. Nothing can perpetuate and bless our nation but religion. Our constitution cannot save us; our laws cannot save us; our magistrates cannot save us; our military arms cannot save us; they are all too weak to cope with thirteen millions of the sons of Adam, under a government as free, as voluntary, as feeble as ours. But religion *can* save us. LET MAN'S IMMORTALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY, LET THE LAW OF GOD WITH ITS ETERNAL SANCTIONS, LET THE HOPE OF PARDON AND OF A BETTER INHERITANCE TO THE PENITENT IN ANOTHER WORLD, BE FAITHFULLY AND EVERYWHERE PROCLAIMED AND BELIEVED; THE DIVINE SPIRIT ATTENDING AND RENEWING THE LIFE AND POWER OF PURE RELIGION AMONG OUR CHURCHES AND PEOPLE — and farewell to all fear for our nation. There will be the lighting down to us of JEHOVAH'S power and presence; HE will be a 'wall of fire round about us, and a glory in our midst.' But in order to this, we must cease from our contentions, our excitements, our alienations, our absorbing interest in almost everything but religion; ministers of the gospel, especially, who have suffered themselves to

be too much diverted from their great work, must come back to it with more undivided aim, and their brethren of the churches must stand by them ; — We must cease from man, humble ourselves in the dust for our sins, plead with agonizing importunity for the descent of the Holy Spirit, saying with united heart and hope, 'Come and let us return to the Lord, for he hath torn and he will heal us, he hath smitten and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us ; in the third day he will raise us up and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord. His going forth is prepared as the morning, and he will come to us as the rain, as the latter and former rain to the earth.' Then shall we realize the promised blessings of the latter day ; Zion will rejoice and the daughters of Zion sing, 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace ; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation ; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth ! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice ; with the voice together shall they sing : for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem : for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in

the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.'

Great are our encouragements in the work of thus Christianizing our nation; for we are assured that the kingdoms of this world are *promised* to Christ, and there is ample indication in the Word of God and in the steps of his providence across the earth, that the redemption of this promise draweth nigh. Not only may we expect that Christ will secure this nation to himself, but that he will also honor it with the instrumentality of spreading abroad the robes of his light and power over all the kingdoms of the world. Let us then gird on the Christian armor, and go forth to our holy duties. Let wisdom and gentleness, let boldness and decision attend our steps. Let us be worthy to live in an age and nation, ordained to introduce a new era to the world and bring in an everlasting righteousness upon the nations. Let us bequeath to our children, and to all posterity, the blessings we enjoy, greatly increased; and although these eyes will be closed in death, and these hands will have ceased from their labor, long before the desire of our hearts will be fully accomplished, yet shall we be permitted to look down from heaven and behold this vast nation peopled throughout with intelligence, freedom, religion and millennial gladness; yea, even a regained paradise blooming over the whole earth,

shall we then behold, as we participate in the thrilling and sublime ecstacy of that triumphant song, with which heaven and earth will resound, when all the redeemed shall in concert sing, 'THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD ARE BECOME THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD AND OF HIS CHRIST, AND HE SHALL REIGN FOREVER AND EVER.' AMEN.

SERMON VI.

THE LAW OF CHRISTIAN MORALITY AS APPLIED TO MERCANTILE TRANSACTIONS.

Preached in Park Street Church, Sabbath Evening, Oct. 25, 1835.

MATT. 7 : 12. Therefore all things whatever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them : for this is the law and the prophets.

In the preceding verses our Savior announces the righteous conduct of our Heavenly Father towards us his children. He then enjoins on us to imitate his example, in our conduct towards each other ; and to render his injunction the more intelligible and valid, requires us to place ourselves in the condition of our neighbors, and to do to them as we would righteously wish them to do to us ; — a truly golden law, but like most other laws of practical Christianity very imperfectly obeyed.

Indeed Christianity as a system of ethics relating to business transactions, is not generally well understood. The principal reason of this, is the great gulf between men of study and men of busi-

ness. Religious teachers are usually confined to the interior of their profession, seldom launching out into a knowledge of the laws and movements of the business world; while on the other hand, business men are so engrossed with their active callings, as not to bestow elaborate investigation upon the doctrines and ethical principles of Christianity.

Hence the numerous perplexing cases of casuistry, the frequent embarrassments of good men and unfair advantages of bad men, in mercantile business. Conscientious Christians sometimes labor under serious difficulties in determining what their duty is. The enterprise of some is thus checked; they do not spread themselves out, and command the standing and influence in the mercantile world, which they otherwise might. Others injure their consciences, and thereby frequently suffer a deep and painful obscuration of the light of God's countenance. In the mean time, unprincipled men are not negligent to secure whatever of advantage is by good men for conscience' sake gratuitously resigned into their hands. It is hence eminently desirable to all who reverence the Christian religion, that its law of moral righteousness, as applied to mercantile transactions, be clearly exposed. The speaker is painfully conscious of his inability to do this subject justice; but it is in his heart to do the best for it he can.

The ultimate laws of Christianity, like those of natural science, are few and simple. Simplicity of design and of elementary laws, with prodigality of results, characterize all the works and institutions of God. When you see a science laboring with numerous exceptions, swamped with tedious difficulties, beset with insulated facts resolving themselves into no general laws, be assured that that science is not well understood. The same is true of Christian science, in all its relations; of course, in its relation to mercantile business. The single law announced in our text, expanded and applied, is a sufficient and perfect moral regulator of the mercantile world.

The plan of my discourse is, by laying down some incontestable maxims, first, to elicit the general intention of this Christian law, as related to commercial transactions, and secondly, to show its practical application.

I. Your assent is first required to the following maxims.

1. Mercantile business is *lawful and necessary.* The best interests of society demand it. It is one of the most ancient, continual, and universal employments of the human race. It is rendered necessary by the construction of our globe, by the physical and moral constitution of man, and by the divinely intended division of labor. Clearly,

therefore, it is an employment ordained and sanctioned by the Creator.

2. There is then a *righteous way of pursuing it.* Evidently a righteous business admits of being transacted in a righteous way. If Christianity be designed to direct all lawful employments, of which this is one, then there is a way of pursuing it strictly according to the gospel; and that only is the righteous way. It is also a way entirely practicable to all, not only when all do right, but when many do wrong. For it is not in the divine constitution of things, that a part of mankind should be compelled to violate the gospel, because others do.

3. The Christian method of transacting business must be *adapted to the philosophy and design of the human mind.* It must afford ample scope and motive to the constitutional and right moral energies of mind, leaving in dormancy all others. It calls for mental energy, and gives full play and adequate motives to all the right moral feelings of the soul. Christianity tends to exalt and enoble our natures, whatever be the pursuits in which it engages us.

It is hence easy to see that games of mere *hazard* are uncongenial to the spirit of the gospel. There is in the constitution of every mind a disposition to be excited. If this exerts itself in a healthful exercise of intellect, judgment, and good

moral affections, it turns to a valuable account. But if it exhausts itself in mere passive excitements, it acts against the intention of the gospel, and tends to debase the mind.

A man for instance, may gamble at dice or lotteries, and engage all his natural power of excitement in the hazard of the game, without any profitable exercise of his intellect, or any benefit to his mental and moral nature. He thus uses up his stock of mental excitability, just as the drunkard uses up his stock of nervous excitability, only to his destruction.

The excitement of mere chance — something aside from the natural course of things, and hence allowing no place to the exercise of forethought and judgment — and indeed all excitement, however produced, which is merely passive, luxurious, unconnected with severe personal thought and effort, tends by a certain law of our nature to kill the soul. It is the same kind of error into which some persons fall on the subject of religion, making regeneration and Christian growth a sort of hap-hazard business, — expecting by some felicitous sport of grace to be lifted to the skies, without personal effort and self-denial. It is looking for an indolent and royal way to glory. Such persons live by the excitement of stimulating preachers, in the same way that theatre-going, and novel-reading, and game-playing people live by *their*

modes of excitement, till the higher energies of their souls languish, their intellects become enfeebled, and their moral principles subject to the caprice of wind and tide. Such persons make but sickly feverish Christians, if Christians at all.

The same must be the effect of mercantile business on minds engaged in it, when conducted in a way to make it a game of mere hazard. The tendency to this effect must be in proportion to the degree in which this kind of hazard is allowed to pervade its operations, beyond what is unavoidable. I suppose that *some* hazard *must* attend mercantile, as well as all other human pursuits; and hence from the wise providential adaptation of things, this small unavoidable degree of it, is not uncongenial to the nature of our minds. It is hence plainly for the benefit of a man's own soul, the most important personal interest for him to consult, so to conduct his business as that it shall call for his patient industry — for the steady action of all his mental powers — and subject him as little as possible to the excitements of mere hazard.

There is also another important reason why men in business should pursue this rational course. So woven together are mercantile operations, that if one individual suffers, others suffer with him. A man should then be cautious how he embarks in doubtful speculations, for thereby not only his own, but his neighbor's interests are endangered. If

men cannot be justified in gambling at their own expense, much less can they be justified in gambling at the expense of others.

4. The Christian law of business must be *profitable to* ALL *parties — to buyers as well as sellers.* It is a golden law, working equally both ways, requiring men to do by others as they would themselves be done by; — that is, *well.* Mercantile business then, rightly conducted, is an honorable giving and receiving of benefits. IT IS A BROTHERLY TRANSACTION.

Indeed in the light of the gospel, we may lay down this broad principle, that *no* employment can be right, in which a man does not benefit others, as well as himself. On this principle the manufacturing or selling of ardent spirits, all kinds of lotteries, of gambling, and of fraud, are opposed to the spirit of the gospel; for the gain is all on *one side,* while the other suffers a *dead loss.*

The objections to gambling by dice or by lotteries do not all lie against gambling by chess; for the former affords no mental discipline, being a game of *mere* chance, while the latter does afford some salutary exercise to the intellect. Nevertheless, it is wrong on other grounds. Its moral tendency is inevitably bad, and its result is always a pecuniary dead loss to one of the parties. Nothing is gained to the world. The parties only make a transfer of property from one to the other,

when they might have employed themselves in a way to benefit both parties and society at large.

The principle is a plain one; all can understand it. You may be sure that you are not engaged in a righteous business, or that you are not conducting your business in a righteous way, when you are not thereby conferring a benefit upon society, upon the world, as well as yourself.

5. The ultimate standard of right to which conscience ought ever to appeal, is the *law given by Christ*, 'All things whatever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' Every man transacting business, ought always to interrogate his conscience, 'Is this doing to others, as I would righteously wish others to do to me.' If he cannot honestly respond in the affirmative, he is going counter to the spirit of Christianity.

These are our postulates. If any deny them, we cannot reason together. Do you admit that these are sound Christian maxims? You may perhaps admit them in the abstract, but contend that in the present depraved state of business, the Christian law cannot be carried into full effect. You would be glad to abide by it, you would like to steer your ship in a straight line, but you are subjected to so many unavoidable fluctuations from providential causes, and from the misconduct of others, that unless you trim to the breeze, and

sometimes deviate to the right and to the left, your ship will founder.

II. I proceed then, as was proposed, to show that obedience to this Christian law is, under all circumstances, entirely practicable.

Let us meet the facts as they are. The great commercial interests of nations and communities are affected, first, by causes entirely above human control — by the seasons of the year, producing or cutting off the crops of the earth, &c.

Secondly, by *political* causes — wars, embargoes, &c. making merchandize contraband and interdicting commerce; — or by the imposition and removal of tariffs, and other governmental movements. Thirdly, by the operations of a few leading minds and heavy capitalists. Subordinate to the three first causes, the mercantile enterprise of our country is primarily controlled by a very few individuals. It seems to be universal in literature, in philosophy, in politics, in fashions, and in business, that a few leading minds give laws to the world.

Those causes which are in the sole hands of God, we have only to meet with a submissive spirit, and to accommodate our conduct to them in a Christian manner, as being divinely intended for our moral discipline.

Political causes are in a measure subject to us, and hence make it the duty of all men to give

their influence to the support of righteous government ; while obligations of immense weight rest upon those who sit in the high places of power, at whose nod millions suffer or rejoice. That all can obey the Christian law, in endeavoring to elevate righteous men to places of power, and that all in those responsible places can obey the Christian law in the discharge of their trusts, none will deny.

Connected with these providential and political causes, the cause most directly and extensively affecting the interests of the great body of merchants, is found in the conduct of those who, from the weight of their purses, or from the boldness of their speculations, control the markets. As when government capriciously alters the tariffs, so when men of large and lawless speculations dash suddenly upon the markets, and disturb the uniform movements of business, it is inevitable that multitudes suffer. Persons just beginning to swim, and only able to keep their heads above water in a calm, cannot endure the violent agitation of the elements which they produce. If, for instance, a large quantity of goods of a particular kind is suddenly thrown into the market, at a price far below the natural value, all the merchants who have that kind of stock on hand must suffer loss ; and if their capital be insufficient to bear them through

the emergency till the proper market value of their stock is restored, the result is a failure.

The complicated machinery of the mercantile world, is like the wheels of Ezekiel's vision — wheels within wheels. Irregularities in the movements of the great wheels, disturb the movements of the numerous smaller ones. How important then, that those who move the great wheels of business, move them steadily and firmly by the law of Christ. Let those to whom God has given this power over the prosperity and happiness of their fellow men, beware how they abuse it. They ought to write the golden law as with the point of a diamond upon their hearts; they owe it not only to God and to their fellow men, but also to themselves; for themselves are dependent on the middling and working classes of society.

How Christian, how noble, how evidently just, for men of large means to extend protection and encouragement to youthful, aspiring and virtuous enterprise, instead of causing or allowing it to be nipped in the bud. We could point to some among us, who have done and are doing thus; and many are they who have already risen up to call them blessed. They have their reward. Obedience to the Christian law is never unrewarded.

Selfishness, on the contrary, is equally blind, sinful, and impolitic. When men of lordly means,

for the sake of adding a few thousands to their treasures, instead of regarding the interests of their dependents, hesitate not to sport with the prosperity and happiness of the numerous families subject to their power, it remains not a question whether their enlarged possessions will ever add one iota to their own or their children's blessedness, either in this world or the world to come. For while the gospel condemns the leveling spirit, it also condemns with a voice of thunder a selfish and abused monopoly of those gifts, which the Lord of the world hath bestowed upon the human race.

That the class of men now considered can obey and ought to obey the Christian law, in their business transactions, no believer in the doctrine of human accountability will doubt. Seldom, however, does the note of Christian remonstrance reach the consciences of such. Yet reach them it finally will, if they refuse to hear it now, in a voice of injured thousands, pealing and echoing down the ages of their eternity.

Owing to the varying condition of our country and of foreign markets, some change and hazard seem to be necessarily incidental to mercantile business; but if those who take the lead of it would walk by the Christian law, and others would follow their steps, an ocean of sin and suffering would be rolled from the world. All classes

would feel the blessing. Only let all be industrious and temperate, and all have a fair chance, and enough is poured upon the earth from the lap of a bountiful Providence, to feed and clothe, enlighten and elevate, yea, even to enrich with all needful blessings, the whole human family.

But a small portion, however, of this, or of any audience, is embraced in the class of which I have just spoken. Come we then next to speak of the men of middling interests — the most numerous class of merchants, to whom the remainder of our discourse will be principally addressed. And here you may be ready to say, 'Reform the leaders, before you presume to approach us. If those who control the merchandize and the markets will go by the Christian law, then may we. But if they will not do it, what then? We must conform to their movements. It is a hard case, if we must sustain the evils of their misdoing, without any means of relief. Begin at head quarters. Preach the Christian law to our national congress; preach it especially to monopolists. Preach it to those men who occasion our difficulties, and not to us who endure them, and who are compelled to make the best of them we can, even by ways which we do not exactly like. It is indeed a case doubly hard, if we are to support the speculations of those who hold the price of our merchandise in their power, and can destroy the hope of our gain in a day, and are

also to sustain the benevolent institutions for enlightening and Christianizing the world. Verily you would have our children beg.'

Consider that an important Christian reformation seldom commences at the extremes of society. It commences not with the highest in wealth and power on the one hand, nor with the lowest orders of society on the other. It begins with the middling classes — the working men. They are the men who are to move the world. Men of indolence, pleasure and fashion; lordly monopolists; and even kings and thrones of state, are destined to feel the influence, and yield to the power which emanates from the intelligent, active and virtuous classes of merchants, mechanics, farmers, and professional men. The leaven of moral righteousness does not begin to operate at the top, or at the bottom, but where our Savior has said, in the 'midst' of the lump.

Consider also that a reformation in favor of right principles, is never made without some of that moral courage, fortitude, and benevolence, which is willing, if need be, to make a sacrifice. The introduction of God's holy religion into our world, after it was lost by the fall, was by the sacrifice of his Son; and this greatest of all blessings has been sustained and carried forward only by the self-sacrifices of its friends at every step. The modern Christian reformations in respect to intemperance,

war, slavery, &c. are effected by the sacrifices of individual and collective benevolence. And if ever the Christian law in respect to business is to be brought forth from the place of mere abstract theory, and made to bear practically upon the conduct of men, so that the glory of the Christian religion shall shine like the sun to enlighten and bless the movements of the mercantile world, it must be done by that spirit of bold benevolence, which shrinks not from doing right, at whatever expense.

Consider further, that the misconduct of others can never put it out of *your* power to do right, or to obtain a living, if it is best to live, by the law of Christ. There is a Christian way of meeting all circumstances. You may not always do the precise things you would do, if others conducted right, but you may do what, under existing circumstances, is strictly according to the spirit of the gospel.

Let us then proceed. If our third maxim is correct, all professions allow a fair competition between their members. The mercantile profession admits it very extensively. It affords scope for calculation, experience, forethought, and tenders almost unbounded premiums to a knowledge of the condition and movements of the world at large. Natural and moral, political and civil, literary and religious causes of all countries and nations are

more or less related to the interests of commerce and merchandise. Of course, other things equal, the more knowledge of the world a man has, the better is he qualified to succeed in mercantile business.

Here then we must meet the important question, Wherein, and to what extent has a merchant a right to avail himself of his industry, knowledge, and sagacity, to advance his interest in competition with others? Here I think an essential distinction is to be recognized between the relation in which merchants stand to each other, and to men of different pursuits. I am especially desirous of being clearly apprehended on this point. The principle which I maintain is this, that the honorable and Christian competition of mind with mind, has its range principally between the members of the *same*, and not between men of *different* professions. I use the term profession in its extensive sense, to denote all kinds of callings. For a man in one calling to avail himself of his professional knowledge, to take advantage of men in other callings, is equally base and unchristian. Thus, for a lawyer to use his legal knowledge, a physician his medical knowledge, or a trader his mercantile knowledge, in a way to take advantage of a farmer, or a mechanic, whose knowledge lies in other things, is fraudulent. For instance, when a lawyer avails himself of his client's ignorance of

legal matters, to swell the amount or the price of his services, or when the physician takes similar advantage of his patient, or when the merchant takes occasion from the purchaser's ignorance of goods, to charge him an exorbitant price, there is evident departure from the Christian law.

The reason is this. — There must be a division of professions ; of course a division of knowledge. The farmer has his kind of knowledge ; the merchant, his ; the mechanic, his ; the lawyer, his ; the physician, his. As the phrase is, ' Every man to his trade.' Evidently, then, a man in any one of these pursuits, when dealing with men in the other pursuits, should take no advantage of their ignorance of his own profession. They are not to be supposed to understand it. He is entitled for his services, to the fair reward due to his profession, but he is not entitled to any gain which he may make of their ignorance of it. Here is no place for the equal and Christian exercise of talent and judgment ; there can be no fair competition of mind with mind. The parties cannot have equal play. The man who takes this kind of advantage, certainly does not do to others, as he would righteously wish others to do to him.

But men *are* to be presumed to understand their *own* profession ; and hence every man is entitled to whatever advantage his superior acquirements may fairly afford him over the other members of it.

Thus the lawyer, or physician, or teacher, or artisan is entitled to the advantage which his superior industry or skill may secure to him over his less industrious and able brethren of the same calling. On the same ground, is a merchant entitled to every fair advantage, which his superior industry and attainments may afford him over other merchants. All the members of any one profession, are running the same race together, and if there be no unfair tripping and jostling of each other by the way, it is Christian and right that each should make the most he can of the talents and means which God has given him. Knowledge is power; and power which men may use in a Christian manner in mercantile, as well as in other pursuits.

Some of you may at first object to this doctrine; but before you renounce it, I beg you well to consider the consequence. You must admit it, or strike a fatal blow at the springs of enterprise. Indeed men have seldom if ever questioned it, as applied to persons in other professions; why then not allow the same privilege to merchants? The cases are parallel. Viewing the subject in this light, I cannot but think that undeserved censure has been often cast upon mercantile competition. Why have not merchants as good right to run the race of enterprise, if they but do it honestly, as men of other callings? This is no violation of the spirit of the Christian law; for one man cannot

righteously wish another to conduct towards him, for the sake of accommodating his indolence, or his private advantage, in a way that abolishes all motives to personal effort and social enterprise.

We come then to the conclusion, that merchants in their relations to each other, have a right to anticipate the market, to acquire and put into exercise all the knowledge and judgment which they can command, and to make the most of them which they honestly can. I admit that this privilege, like the similar privileges of other callings, is liable to abuse; but it is an unavoidable liability, and constitutes a part of our moral probation. It need not be abused. Every man *can* abide by the Christian law, even in the perilous race of commercial enterprise.

But there is a kind of manœuvering sometimes practiced under color of an honorable competition, which is in fact a base imposition upon the public. When, for instance, a man forestalls the market, so as to take the bread from the hungry, the clothing from the naked, the medicine from the sick, the fuel from the shivering and destitute, getting all of an article needful to the community into his own hands, and then forcing his own exorbitant price upon it, he defrauds his fellow citizens. This is not a mere competition with his mercantile brethren; for the article being in his power, they have only to retail it at a fair advance on his price.

The community of buyers and sellers are the sufferers. The man who does thus, enriches himself at the expense of men in other pursuits, men not to be presumed to know the prospects of the market; or if they did, unable to help themselves against his monopoly, — perhaps the very men who are faithfully serving him in their several callings, building his houses, cultivating his vineyards, making his garments, teaching his children.

Hence large monopolies of wealth and power, when connected with unprincipled minds, are dangerous to the public welfare. Those who possess this power over their fellow men, and refuse to abide by the Christian law, must expect to be rebuked by the indignation of an injured community, kindling and burning in a furnace of wrath upon their guilty heads.

But have we not said that merchants have a right to anticipate the market? Truly. But how, and to what intent? Suppose that a man by his superior study, adroitness, and knowledge of those natural, civil, and political changes, which affect the price of merchandise, anticipates the unavoidable rise of the value of a certain article in market; invests his capital in that article, and gets it all into his own hands. His anticipations are realized. The value of the article becomes greatly enhanced. He however takes no advantage of the fact that he has it all in his own hands, to put upon it a

price *additional* to what it would be, if it were in the hands of hundreds; but sells it at the natural and unavoidably enhanced value. However much he may have gained by trading, has he wronged any man? I conceive not. Whom has he wronged? Not other capitalists and wholesale dealers; for according to our third maxim, it was as much their privilege to anticipate the change as his. Not the retailers; for they still retail the article at the same profit, as if they obtained it from many instead of one. Not the community; for they only give the proper market value — the value indicated by causes, above the control of merchants, and what they would have to give at any rate. Now here is ample scope for the constitutional energies of mind, and full play for all the industry and sagacity requisite to sustain the spirit of mercantile enterprise, without any encroachment upon the spirit of the gospel. I simply state the principle with a single illustration, leaving to you the easy task of applying it in the numerous details.

The distinction then between the fair competition of merchants with each other, and the imposition of merchants upon the community, is very broad and obvious. In the former case, the merchant lawfully exercises his abilities in the purchase and sale of an article, allowing its prices to be regulated by causes which he cannot control.

In the latter case, he monopolizes the article, to the intent that he may *force* upon it his own artificial price. The one is a *natural*, the other a *factitious* value; the one created by *Providence*, the other by the *merchant*.

The latter case is just as if a physician were to monopolize all the medical science, or a lawyer all the legal knowledge, or a Christian preacher all the theology, and then by retailers deal it out to the community at his own exorbitant price. Would not such a physician, or lawyer, or preacher, be a public nuisance? Not less a one is such a merchant.

We pass next to the inquiry, Whether it is right to have different prices? a very important inquiry, and one touching rather tenderly upon the sensibilities of merchants. By having different prices, I mean selling the article at the same time, to different individuals, at different cash prices. I conceive the custom to be *wrong;* — for the following reasons.

First, it bears very unequally and unkindly upon the various members of community. There is a class of honorable minded persons, who consider it an impeachment of your character to question your price. They take it for granted that when you state your price, you tell the truth. There is also a class of citizens, farmers, mechanics, teachers, numerous females, not conversant with the prices

of merchandise, or the chicanery of different prices. On such you impose exorbitant prices, for the sake of being able to afford your goods to persons, perhaps sharper, but of more equivocal character, at even less than the real market value. Is this doing to your good neighbor, who casts himself upon your integrity, as you would righteously wish to have him do to you? Suppose yourself a school-teacher, having no acquaintance with the quality and price of goods, would you not feel injured, if you should pay forty dollars for five yards of cloth, for a suit of clothes to a trader, confiding in his integrity, who should sell the same to another person immediately after for thirty dollars?

Nor does it screen you to say, that the person from whom you take the higher price, is not obliged to give it; that you have a right to ask it, and he is free to give it or not, as he chooses. That a man is not obliged to be wronged, is no apology for you to wrong him. Perhaps however you say that you do not wrong him; that you sell to him as cheap as you can afford, and it is none of his concern if you sell to others for less. Make the case then your own. Would you not feel injured, to be thus treated? Moreover, do you not well know that you could not sell to some for less, if you did not sell to others for more, than the proper market value? Your plan is, to exact a high price from those of whom you can get it, with a view of thus

affording to take less of those from whom you cannot get it, that you may thus trade as largely as possible. Many compound with their consciences to do this, supposing it impracticable to succeed without. But we think we can show them "a more excellent way."

Secondly, you not only wrong others, but unhappily the very persons whose interest you are in honor most bound to regard. Is it not peculiarly base to take advantage of the man who honors you with his confidence? On the other hand, you deal most generously with those who place the least confidence in you; those to whom you really owe the least gratitude. If you are at liberty to withhold your favor from any, is it not from those who do not confide in you? This is the principle on which God acts. All whom he blesses, must confide in his character; must believe that he is the *rewarder* of them that seek him. And if you are bound to show favor to any, is it not to those who confide in you? This too is the principle on which God acts; and are you not required to imitate him? But on the contrary, you turn the tables, and strangely deal exactly the other way.

Thirdly, this mode of dealing, however sanctioned by custom, inevitably tends at once to a man's own moral injury, and to the destruction of all social confidence. Its effects on all parties are those of lying. It introduces suspicion and jeal-

ousy, in the place of confidence and esteem. It thus corrodes and sunders the golden links that are designed to bind men to each other, in a state of social love and mutual dependence. For it is impossible for men of pure and lively sensibilities to feel the full soul of confidence towards one in any matter, who practices duplicity in business; and confidence withheld, cannot be reciprocated. Let the man who deals thus be assured that he is continually alienating himself from the sympathies of his fellow-men, and creating an impassable gulph betwixt himself and that heaven of virtuous friendship, which is worth ten thousand times more than all the gold for which he barters it.

But while the seller should have but one price, the buyer should not attempt to beat it down. It is as much the duty of the buyer not to attempt to purchase an article for less than its value, as it is of the seller not to attempt to sell it for more. It is not to be forgotten, that the buyer may have a distorted conscience as well as the seller; and when two crooked consciences come together in dealing, they are prone to make very crooked work. Yet the reform should commence with the seller. While he is known to have both an asking and a taking price, how can the purchaser, who is unacquainted with goods, defend himself from imposition, but by resorting to the ungrateful task of calling his price in question?

But the merchant assures us that he cannot trade in any other way; that many customers are so simple, or so educated, as to suppose that they must of course beat down his price, whatever it be, or make a bad trade. Such cases however would soon be rare, if merchants would do their duty in respect to uniform prices. The evil is of their own creating, and they must be first to remove it. They have taught their customers to *expect* duplicity in their dealings. I am confident that I speak the sentiments of the virtuous part of the community when I say, that they would rejoice to have the *price* of merchandise uniformly *right* — neither too high nor too low — and the same to all; and never to touch it themselves. So it should be. With the prices of goods, ordinary purchasers ought to have nothing to do. In every right theory of trade, the merchant is the only man to declare the price of merchandise, for he only is to be supposed best to know its quality and market value. It is in the power of any merchant to commence the reform in this particular, however others may do. Let him become known as dealing righteously and with the same price to all, and not many months would pass before the buyer who should approach him to challenge his prices, would be condemned by the unanimous voice of public indignation. 'With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.' This law pervades the rational uni-

verse. He who conducts honorably towards the community, shall have the community conduct honorably towards him. The reaction is not always instantaneous, but ultimately sure.

A great source of iniquity and trouble among merchants, is their *haste to be rich.* Impatient of the steady, industrious, persevering course, they are for embarking in bold and rash speculations. The glorious fortune of some adventurers sets their imaginations on fire, and they are led to hope that by some game of hazard, or some felicitous manœuvre, they too shall turn over a stone concealing a bed of gold. Nothing is more fatal to their success in life. As a general rule, there is no short and royal road to wealth; and the effect of pampering the imagination with chimerical prospects, is not less ruinous to merchants, than is the greedy reading of novels to the fair sex. A world in which imagination unrestrained luxuriates, and hope irrational revels, is not the safe and innocent world for human beings, be they men or women. Hasting to be rich, is almost inevitably attended with sin and danger. "He that HASTETH to be rich hath an EVIL EYE, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him."

Others not quite so quixotic, but yet afraid to do just right and trust God, take council only of a pur blind expediency. They are anxious to buy and sell and get gain as fast as they can, and to

this end suppose it necessary to conform to the customs of business, and practice some deception. They do not quite like to do so, they wish they could succeed as well in some other way, but they really suppose they cannot; and as in the present state of business it seems to be unavoidable, they flatter themselves that it is lawful under such circumstances. It demands no ordinary amount of Christian wisdom and integrity, to resist this temptation to do wrong. In a world like this, itis no small affair to be strictly honest. It was truly said,

"An honest man's the noblest work of God."

And we may add, the rarest. But there are some merchants of Christian honesty; and the number is increasing. The leaven of righteousness is at work, and will finally pervade the whole mercantile world. The time is approaching, when all business will be transacted on Christian principles. The work of reform is begun, and it will go on; happy are they who lead it by their example. To direct you in this, if the foregoing maxims and reasonings be correct, we are enabled to present the following plain and practicable rules of business, as legitimately deduced from the golden law.

1. THE MERCHANT SHOULD WELL UNDERSTAND HIS BUSINESS. He ought not to enter upon this field of perilous encounter, untrained and unharnessed. Duty demands of every man, that he qualify himself for the pursuit in which he en-

gages. He owes it to the *public*. If it be wrong for the physician, or the lawyer, or the mechanic, to tender to the public his services before he is qualified, no less is it for the merchant. He owes it to *himself*. If he neglects this duty, and, rushing into business unprepared, finds himself unable to compete with his brethren, let him blame no person for his failure but himself.

2. He should not allow his ambition to exceed his capital.

Three things constitute the merchant's capital — knowledge, reputation, money. A man of a given capital can trade more largely for possessing extensive information, and an established character for integrity. But in the time of pressure, money is indispensable ; and as unforeseen changes are liable to come, it is Christian prudence for him to keep within the reach of his pecuniary capital. Better it is both for himself and the community, to trade less and advance safely. Especially when first entering upon business, should he 'make haste slowly.'

3. He should exercise his utmost vigilance in purchasing. If he well understands his business, he will seldom err in this matter. But if his judgment is too defective to avoid frequent gross errors, he ought to conclude that Heaven never made him for a merchant, and forthwith seek some other employment.

4. He should regulate the price of his goods by their cost and their market value. If the market be uniform, he should sell them at a fair per centage; if it fluctuate, so must his loss or gain. If the value of goods on his hands rise, he has a right to raise their price, as an offset to his losses from their falling. For evidently it cannot be a just rule, which does not work equally both ways. If purchasers do not sustain the loss when goods fall, they cannot righteously require the merchant to relinquish the gain when they rise.

4. He should have but one price. Here is the rub. The season of trade is passing; he is anxious to put off his goods, and the temptation is strong to sell for less or for more, as he can light of purchasers, rather than not to trade. Purchasers will trade where they can buy cheapest, and his neighbor will undersell him. The integrity of his character does not guarantee the sale of his goods. This certainly looks like a hard case; nor am I disposed to question that here is a serious perplexity, and one that has often afflicted the consciences of good men.

But it is not insurmountable. It has been surmounted in several instances; and what *has* been done, *can* be done. Let the merchant uniformly place his goods as low as he ought to afford them. If he deals in barter, let the rules of an equitable

barter graduate the increase of his price, so that it shall still be virtually the same cash price to all. Let him be willing to work cheap and gain slowly. Let it become understood that his line is straight, that nothing will turn him from it to the right or to the left; and what he loses at first will soon return in esteem for his character, securing to him a more large, safe, and permanent custom.

5. He should never disguise the faults, or overstate the quality of his goods. If he has committed an error in purchasing, let him suffer the loss. The seller may have wronged him, but here let the evil stop; let him not wrong another to obtain redress. Better suffer wrong than do wrong. Let him sell his goods for just what he honestly supposes them to be. In one word, let him do to others as he would righteously wish to have others do to him. Let him do so, not capriciously and to favorites, but to all men at all times; and the golden law, thus obeyed, will in due time give him its golden reward.

These rules are practicable. I can point you to a merchant of high standing, whose history is an illustration of this. Having served his apprenticeship in the country, and pursued a country trade in a small way till he accumulated about two thousand dollars, he commenced business in the city. He invested his little capital in goods to the best advantage, and opened a small shop. He

purchased but few goods, and sold them at small profit. He fixed his eye on a few safe traders of his country acquaintance, and, by his judgment in purchasing and his equity in selling, secured their confidence. No man ever purchased an article of him, which he afterwards found to be less valuable than it was recommended to be. No man was ever taken in by him. The consequence was, that his customers gradually increased with his means of business, and those too of the best kind. Honest men love to deal with honest men. Confidence in his character often induced customers to transmit to him orders for goods, relying alone on his judgment. This confidence he never abused. In the mean time his habits were those of industry, economy, and strict temperance. He rose early, labored diligently, expended little for dress and amusements, and the money realized from the sale of goods, he expended in new purchases. Thus he kept the snow ball rolling over and over, enlarging at every revolution, for more than twenty years, and he is now, at the age of about forty-five, worth two hundred thousand dollars. This has come, not of any unaccountably kind freak of fortune, nor yet of any brilliant speculation ; it is the legitimate result of a series of obvious natural causes.

Now the delusion of many is, that they overlook the CAUSES by which such results are produced.

You see a mechanic operating with dexterity; you see a physician controlling diseases; you see a lawyer or a preacher chaining his audience by his eloquence or his logic; you attempt to do the same, and you fail. What is the matter? You have not passed through the preparatory steps. You are dazzled at the result which you witness, but you do not consider the years of severe effort, by which it has come. So when you look upon a great merchant, see him handling a large capital and embarking in large enterprises, you are fired with ambition to do the same. You attempt, and you fail. What is the matter? The same as before. You have not passed through the preparatory steps. He was early trained to industry; he was perhaps a poor boy. He served a faithful apprenticeship. He entered cautiously into business. He lived economically, and saved his earnings. While others were spending, he was earning; while others were wasting their spare time in idle amusements, he was improving his mind; while others were speculating, he was working; thus he toiled steadily on from month to month, and year to year, Franklin-like, till he reached the eminence where you behold him. Go thou and do likewise.

That we are dependent on the favor of Providence, that it is God who putteth down one and setteth up another, I would be last to question;

but such are the laws of Providence, that a wisely directed diligence is the ordinary way to success. The Christian way is the wise way. Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. But if mere *temporal* motives should suffice, how much more should the vast motives of *eternity* suffice, to induce men to pursue the honest course. If men may afford to live honestly for the world's sake, how much more for Christ's sake. Oh, if all professing Christians would come entirely out from the evil customs of the world, if they would come quite up to the gospel mark, and deal in strict righteousness with all men, how would the gospel have free course and be glorified, and thousands of dark and frozen hearts be filled with divine light and love. When shall the religion of Jesus shine forth in all its beauty!

But Christian morality is not the duty of professing Christians only; it is incumbent upon all. I have the pleasure to address a large number of merchants of various classes; what a benign influence, my respected friends, would go forth of your example upon the mercantile community, if all of you would carry the law of Christ fully into your mercantile transactions. And if you are then successful, how much more valuable will be your property, obtained in a Chris-

tian way. If you are not successful in temporal things, you will still have the glorious reward of an approving conscience, with as much of this world's goods as God shall see to be best for yourselves and your children. Would you have more? Infinitely better without it. 'They that *will* be rich,' despite of Christian honesty, 'fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the unchristian love of money is the root of all evil; which while some have coveted, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.'

Are there not other objects of more importance than riches? What is this deity, to which men pay so costly a sacrifice? Can it redeem your bodies from the grave, or your souls from perdition? Is not an approving conscience, the esteem of the good, a pure mind, THE EVERLASTING FAVOR OF GOD, of more importance to you? Will you barter heaven for gold? In the name of Him who cannot lie, and of the immutable laws which sustain his throne and govern his universe, I solemnly warn you, that property acquired in any other than a righteous way, you will find to be dearly gotten. It will fortify you against religion. It will environ you in sin, as with an iron fence; — it will put you in the power of the adversary. 'Your gold and

silver will eat your flesh as it were fire!' It will render your dying pillow thorny, and your eternity unspeakably wretched. You may roll up unrighteous wealth, and nourish your hearts, as in the day of slaughter, but a voice of thundering wrath will pursue you through the grave into eternity, 'Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries which shall come upon you!'

Let me, in conclusion, also invoke you to consider not only the Christian means, but also the Christian END of riches. We have shown that the gospel allows full scope to the spirit of commercial enterprise. But to what end? That you may indulge the selfish passions? — that you may live in pleasure on the earth, and be wanton? — that you may lord it over the world? — that you may forget God, and ruin your souls? — or, that you may enervate and spoil your children? — Is it not rather that you may use the means thus acquired to DO GOOD to the world, to advance the Redeemer's kingdom and secure immortal treasures in heaven? Let me then fulfil my commission, to "charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor TRUST IN UNCERTAIN RICHES, but in the LIVING GOD, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they DO GOOD, THAT THEY BE RICH IN GOOD WORKS, READY TO DISTRIBUTE, WILLING TO COMMU-

NICATE ; LAYING UP IN STORE FOR THEMSELVES A GOOD FOUNDATION AGAINST THE TIME TO COME, THAT THEY MAY LAY HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE." AMEN.

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